

John Hacket

74 THE ~~28~~ 2.

SAINTS

DAILY ~~of 120~~

EXERCISE.

A Treatise,
Unfolding the whole Duty
of PRAYER.

Delivered in five SERMONS,
upon 1 Theff. 5. 17.

By the late Faithfull and Worthy
Minister of IESVS CHRIST,
JOHN PRESTON,
Doctor in Divinity, Chaplaine in ordinary to his
Majesty, Master of Emanuel College in Cambridge,
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The Eighth Edition, Corrected.

*The effectfull fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth
much, James 5. 16.*
*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not heare
my Prayer, Psal. 66. 18.*

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STAINES

DAILY

EXERCISE



Academia Cantabrigiensi
Liber

2212:07



To the Reader.

173/19.

Courteous Reader,



O discourse largely of the necessity and use of this piece of spirituall armour, after so many learned and usefull Treatises, upon this subject, may seeme superfluous, especially considering that there is much spoken to this purpose, for thy satisfaction, in the insuing Treatise; wherein, besides the unfolding of the nature of this duty (which is The Saints daily Exercise) and strong inforcement to it, there is an endeavour to give satisfaction in the most incident cases, want of clearing whercof is usually an hindrance to the chearefull, and ready performance thereof. In all which, what hath bene done by this Reverend and worthy man, we had rather should appeare in the Treatise it selfe, to thy indifferent judgement, than to be much in setting downe our owne opinion. This we doubt not of, that, by reason of the spirituall, and convincing manner of handling this Argument, it will winne acceptance with many, especially considering, that it is of that nature, wherein, though much have bene spoken, yet much more may be said with good relish to those that have any spirituall sense: for it is the most spirituall action, wherein we have neerer communion with God, than in any other holy performance, and whereby it pleaseth God to conveigh all good to us, to the performance whereof Christians finde most backwardnesse, and indisposednesse, and from thence most dejection of spirit; which also in these times, is most necessary, wherein, unless

To the Reader.

unlesse we fetch helpe from Heaven, this way, we see the Church, and Cause of God like to be trampled under feet. Only remember, that wee let these Sermons passe forth as they were delivered by himselfe, in publicke, without taking that liberty of adding or detracting, which, perhaps, some would have thought meete: for we thought it best that his owne meaning should be expressed in his owne words and manner, especially considering there is little, which perhaps may seeme superfluous to some, but may, by Gods blessing, bee usefull to others. It would be a good prevention of many inconveniencies, in this kinde, if able men would bee perswaded to publish their owne Workes in their life time, yet wee thinke it a good service to the Church, when that defect is supplied by giving some life to those things, which otherwise would have dyed of themselves. The blessing of these Labours of his we commend unto God, and the benefit of them unto thee, resting,

Thine in our Lord Iesus Christ,

RICHARD SIBBS.

JOHN DAVENPORT.

THE



THE CONTENTS OF THE Ensuing TREATISE.

	Pag.		Pag.
T HE words opened; wherein		without prayer, answered three	
are three things.	2	ways.	46
1 What prayer is.	<i>ibid.</i>	Object that the godly pray and speed	
2 Why the Lord will have us pray,	31	nor, and the reasons.	50
for 7. reasons.		When we pray to spend on our lusts.	52
3 What it is to pray continually.	15	GOD grants not our prayers in our	
Prayer twice a day, the grounds of	16	manner.	54
it.		Nor by our meaner.	56
Wicked men their misery.	18	Nor in our time.	59
Motives to prayer 8.	19	God defers to grant our requests for	
		4 reasons.	64
<i>Objections against Prayer.</i>		6 Dangers in neglecting prayer.	70
Objection against time spent in pray-	32	9 Cases of conscience concerning	
er, answered 3. waies.		prayer.	71
Object. against prayer in respect of		1 Case about wandring thoughts, 4	
unfitnesse, answered two waies.	34	causes of them.	72
Objection concerning difficulties to		2 Case concerning dulnesse, with the	
pray, 7. mentioned, and their reme-		causes of it.	74, 75
dies.	36, 39	3 Case of praying after some great	
Object. against prayer, God knowes	41	sinne, 3 reasons for it.	76
our want.		4 Case concerning a set forme of	
Objection from Gods purpose to be-		prayer.	80
slow things, answered 2. waies.	42	5 Case concerning voice, and gesture	
Object. that GOD is not changed by		in prayer.	84
oure endeavours.	44	6 Case of straitnesse of time, 5 cau-	
Object. wicked men enjoy blessings		tions	

The Contents.

tions in it.	88, 90	right.	101
7 Case for use of means, 4 reasons of it.	92	2 Condition is faith, and what faith is required?	105, 106
3 Cautions in using means.	94	3 Condition fervency, with cautions concerning it.	115
8 Case concerning praying in faith.	98	4 Condition humility, 4 reasons of it.	123
9 Case of knowing whether our prayers be heard or not.	100	5 Condition holiness, in 3 things.	126
7 Conditions or qualifications in Prayer.		6 Condition thankfulness.	137
2 Condition, the person must be		7 Condition, to come to God in the Name of Christ.	140

A View of the Scriptures alledged and opened in this TREATISE.

Booke.	Ch.	Verse.	Fol.	Booke.	C.	Verse.	Fol.
Genes.	32	10	122	Luke	18	14	125
Levit.	5	11	142 143	John	4	24	86
Levit.	16	12 13	43	John	16	24	22
Levit.	17	3 6	41	Acts	13	22	123
Deut.	8	11	25	Rom.	8	27	3 10
1 Sam.	1	15	6 83	Rom.	12	11	120
2 Sam.	7	11 18	42 123	1 Cor.	10	11	16
1 King.	18	41 42	42	1 Cor.	12	9	55
1 King.	22	31	39	2 Cor.	6	9	130
2 Chron.	7	14	122	2 Cor.	8	12	34
2 Chron.	10	12	110	Ephes.	6	18	19 23
2 Chron.	34	11	ibid.	Phil.	4	6	22 13
2 Chron.	26	16	10	1 Tim.	2	8	104 126
Nehem.	1	13	21	1 Tim.	4	4	175
Iob	15	4	28	1 Tim.	6	9	51
Iob	22	21	13	2 Tim.	1	3	15
Psal.	4	3	103	Hebr.	3	12	79
Psal.	22	4	111	Hebr.	5	7	69
Psal.	38	16	66	Hebr.	9	24	144
Psal.	51	16 17	124	Hebr.	10	2	128
Psal.	146	5 6	107	Hebr.	10	22	130
Prov.	30	8	5	James	1	5 6	105 106
Isay	45	4	48	James	3	9	86
Isay	66	2	122	James	4	3	51
Ezek.	36	31	125	James	4	6	122 115
Dan.	6	3	16	James	4	13 14	140
Dan.	6	10	20	James	5	13	23
Dan.	9	3 4	42	James	5	15	21
Hosea	7	14	3	James	5	16	102
Mal.	3	10	32	Jude	1	28	13
Mat.	7	7	108	Revel.	2	10	64
Mat.	15	28	124	Revel.	3	8	67
Mat.	26	41	9 24	Revel.	8	3	11

Year	Month	Day	Time	Place	Remarks
1871	Jan.	1	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	2	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	3	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	4	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	5	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	6	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	7	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	8	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	9	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	10	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	11	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	12	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	13	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	14	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	15	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	16	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	17	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	18	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	19	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	20	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	21	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	22	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	23	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	24	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	25	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	26	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	27	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	28	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	29	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	30	10	10	10
1871	Jan.	31	10	10	10

THE SAINTS DAILY EXERCISE.

The first Sermon.

TUES. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

THE Apostle here in the latter end of this Epistle, heapes up many precepts together, and therefore wee shall not neede to seeke out the dependance of these words from those that go before, or those that follow after. Rejoyce e-

vermore. (saith he.) *Pray continually. In all things give*

B

give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Iesus to you-wards.

We are now fallen upon this Text, where this duty of prayer is commended to us, and it is a command from God himselfe delivered shortly, as lawes are wont to bee, without any great premisses and reasons, and indeed, hath therefore the more authority in it.

Pray continually.

3 Things considerable, for opening of the words,

IN the handling of which, wee will doe these three things:

First, we will shew you what *Prayer* is.

Secondly, why the *Lord* requires this at our hands; for a man might object, the *Lord* knowes my wants well enough, hee knowes my minde, and how I am affected? I, but yet the *Lord* will have us to *pray*, and to aske before he will bestow it upon us.

And lastly, what it is to *pray continually*.

1 What prayer is,

2 In generall.

For the first: if wee would define *prayer* in generall to you, I would give you no more but this description of it; *It is an expression of the mind to the Lord*: sometimes by words, sometimes without words, but yet there must bee an expression, and some opening of the will to him. This is the generall.

3 In speciall.

But now to know what a *right prayer* is, what such a prayer is, as God accepts, you must have another definition which must have more ingredients into it, and so, *Prayer* is (nothing else but) *an expression or offering of those holy, and good desires*.

one to God, that arise from the Spirit, or the regenerate part, in the Name of Iesus Christ. Where you are to observe this; That the prayers which wee make, are divided into one of these two sorts:

First, some are such prayers as are the expressions of our owne spirits, the voyce of our owne spirits, and there is nothing but flesh in them; such prayers any naturall man may make to the Lord: And these the Lord regards not, he knowes not the meaning of them, that is, he doth not accept them.

Secondly, there are prayers that are the voice of Gods owne Spirit, that is, such as arise from the regenerate part that is within us, which is quickened and enlarged to pray from the immediate helpe of the Holy Ghost; these prayers are onely accepted, and of these it is said, *He knowes the meaning of the Spirit*: that is, he so knowes it, and sees it, that also he accepts it. Therefore you shall see in *Hosea 7. 14.* when they prayed, and prayed earnestly, yea, not only set a day apart for prayer, But also called a solemne Assembly, and kept a fast, yet, saith the Lord plainly, *Fee did not call upon mee when you howled upon your beds; for (saith he) you assembled your selves for Corne, and for wine;* which any naturall man may doe: And therefore (saith he) it is but an *howling*; it is as the voice of beasts, to seeke for wine and oyle, and corne; but no prayer, for he saith plainly, *You called not upon me,* when notwithstanding, they spent a whole day in prayer. The meaning is, that the Lord regards this as no prayer at all.

Division of prayers into two sorts.

1
Such as come from our own spirits.

Note.

2
Such as come from Gods Spirit.

Rom. 8. 27.

Hosea 7. 14.

Prayers of wicked men howling.

The termes of
the description
opened.

Why hee u-
seth the word
(dispositions)
rather than de-
sires.

With the de-
sires and dis-
positions of
men are good.

Quest.

Ans.

That tempo-
ral things may
be desired in a
carnall man-
ner, and car-
nall things in
a spirituall
manner and
bow.

And therefore to open a little this description unto you; (for it is one maine business that wee have to doe, in handling of this Text, to describe to you the meaning of this precept, What the nature of prayer is,) that you may know what kind of prayer it is, that prevails with God. I say, *It is an expression of holy and good dispositions.* I use that expression rather of dispositions, than desires, because there is some part of prayer that stands in thanksgiving, when you desire nothing at Gods hands, but give thanks for that you have received; mark, first, that they must be *holy and good*, the desires and dispositions must bee good: for that is a rule, *All the affections and desires are good, or evil, according as their Objects are*; those that are fixed upon good things, are good desires.

You will say then, what are the good things that make the desires and dispositions of the heart good?

They are temporall things, and spirituall both. A man may pray for temporall things in a spirituall manner, and the desire may be good; and againe, he may pray for spirituall things in a carnall manner, and the desire may bee naught. Therefore that must be observed withall, that it is not simply the object, but there is a certaine manner of desiring too: for Example, if a man pray for temporall things, for outward comforts, such things as belong to the present state of his body here; If he pray for them with these conditions, that hee may have that which is conven-

ent for him, he prays for such a measure as God sees to be meet, as *Pro. 30. Feed me with convenient food for me*; this prayer is good. But (if any man will be rich, as *1 Tim. 6.*) it is an inordinate desire, when men will have excessse of these outward things, and more than is fit for them. And again, if you desire that which is *convenient*, and *spend it upon your lusts*, if you desire health, and long life, that you may live more pleasantly, if you desire wealth, that you may live more deliciously, and not simply that which the creature may desire, and to the end that you may be the more inabled to serve the Lord in these things, your desire is not good. So I say, first it must be for that which is *convenient*, secondly, you must not *spend it upon your lusts*, but in Gods service.

Prov. 30. 8.

1 Tim. 6. 9.

When the desire of outward things is good

And lastly, wee must pray for them in a right method, *First seeke the Kingdome of God, and then other things*, that is, Chiefely and in the first place, pray for spirituall things, and then afterwards for temporall in order unto them. We should so pray for temporall things, as our prayers may be spirituall. On the other side, a man may pray for spirituall things in a carnall manner, as for temporall things in a spirituall manner. A naturall man may pray earnestly for faith, and for grace, and repentance, not out of any beauty that he sees in them, not out of any taste and relish that he hath of them, but because hee thinkes them a bridge to leade him to Heaven, and that he cannot come thither without them: when he considers in his heart that he cannot be

How a carnall man may pray for grace.

Spira his case.

saved without these things, I say, then hee may desire them, and that earnestly. It was the case of *Francis Spira*, who cryed so earnestly for grace, that he might have but a drop of it, because hee could not be saved without it; and he gives the reason himselfe, when he said withall, he saw no excellency in it, he desired it not for it selfe, and therefore he thought his prayers should not bee heard. Thus you see that prayer is an expression of *holy and good desires*.

These desires must be offered to God.

Againe, it is an offering them up to the Lord: But I will not stand upon that (you are well enough instructed in it) that whatsoever petition is made to the creature, it is not a prayer, it must onely be offered up to the Lord.

Arising from the spirit, or regenerate parts.

Then I adde, it is an expression of such desires as must arise from the regenerate part, that is, looke how much there is of the regenerate part in a prayer, looke how much the *holy Spirit* hath to doe in it, look how much comes from that which is called the *inward man*, so farre it is sanctified; so far that prayer is accepted, and no further. But, that we may open this a little more fully, we will shew you it by some other expressions of prayer, that we finde in the Scriptures.

Expressions of prayer in the Scriptures.

1 Sam. 1. 15.

Prayer is called a *lifting up of the heart to God*, a *pouring forth of the soule to the Lord*; 1 Sam. 1. 15. A *servicing of him in spirit*; so Paul calleth it. Now if wee open these phrases a little, you shall know more fully wherein the nature of right praying to God consists. That phrase the Apostle useth (*whom I serve in my spirit*) is the same word in the origi-

nall

all that is used for fasting and praier. Now what is it to pray to God in the spirit? for we may say, a man cannot make a prayer, but there is an act of his mind gowes to it, and every man, what service soever he performes, his spirit must needs have a hand in it, so that it cannot bee performed without the mind.

I take this to be the meaning of it; for the Apostles scope is, to distinguish the true and holy services of God from those that are but shadowes and counterfeit, and as it were, but the body and carcasse of right service. Therefore, when he saith, *I serve the Lord in my spirit, or, I pray in the spirit*; the meaning is this, the prayer of a man is not onely that which the understanding dictates to him, but when the whole soule, the wil & affections go together with his petition, and whatsoever the petition is; a mans heart is affected accordingly. As for example, If a man come to confesse his sins, & yet slights them inwardly in his heart; if a man pray for reconciliation with God, and yet have no longing and sighing in his heart after it; if he earnestly ask grace, & the mortification of sinful lust, when the heart doth not inwardly seeke it, now he prayes not in the spirit. To pray in the spirit is as that in *Ioh. 4. 24.* *He will be worshipped in spirit and in truth*: the meaning is, so to pray as the heart go together with our petition. The same also is the meaning of that whe a man powreth forth his soule before the Lord: So *Hannah* saith of her selfe, *I am a woman troubled, &c. and powre out my soule before the Lord*: which is not when a man deli-

To serve God
in the Spirit,
what.

Ioh. 4. 24.

To powre out
the soule to
God, what.

Austin.

Simile.

Note.

vers to God that which the understanding and mind hath devised only, (for prayer is not a work of wit, or of memory) but when a man powreth forth his whole soule (that is) his wil and affections, when they goe together, and there is no reservation in his mind; but all within him is opened and explicate, and exposed to the view of the Lord; not as *Austin* saith of himselfe, when hee came to pray for the mortifying of his lusts, saith hee, *I had a secret inward desire that it should not bee done.* Therefore when the soule is powred forth, the meaning is that all must be opened to him, so that when a man will make an acceptable praier; he must make this accompt, he must then call in al his thoughts and affections, and recollect them together as the lines in the center, or as the Sunbeames in a burning Glasse; and that makes prayer to be hot and fervent; whereas otherwise it is but a cold and dissipated thing, that hath no strength or efficacy in it.

Now this withall you must know, that when wee say the whole soule must goe together with the petition, the meaning is, that not onely the will and affections be employed, (for in a naturall man, in his desire of health, when he is sicke, or wanteth assistance & guidance in difficult cases, not only the understanding, but the will and affections are busie enough it is likely) but also wee adde further that that which is called the spirit, and is diffused through the whole soule, be set on worke also in the performance of this holy duty to the Lord, whensoever wee seek to him in prayer.

For

For this you must know, that there are two things in a regenerate man, (for you must take for granted by the way, that no naturall man is able to make a prayer acceptable to God; seeing there is no Spirit in him, but in the regenerate man) there is, I say, flesh and spirit: now when we come to powre forth our hearts to the Lord, that which lies uppermost, will be ready to bee powred forth first; and that which is spirituall, it may be lies in the bottome, and is kept in; so that a man may make a carnall prayer, though he be a holy man; that is, when the flesh hath gotten the upper hand, as in some fits it may; while the mind is filled with worldly sorrow, and worldly rejoycing, and wordly desires, and these (lying uppermost) will bee soonest expressed: such a prayer the Lord regards not, though the man bee holy, from whence it comes: but right prayer is this; when the regenerate part is acted and stirred up, & the flesh, that alwayes hinders, is removed. For you must know this, that wheresoever there is a regenerate part in any man, there is a great aptnesse in that to call upon God; and it cannot be disioyned from it, but that is not alwaies in act.

As we see a fountain, it hath alwaies an aptnesse to powre forth water, it is ready to breake into a current; but if it be stopped with stones and mud or other impediments, it cannot breake out: so he that is a regenerate man, that hath a holy part in him, there is an aptnesse to prayer. Which is that which our Saviour saith, *Mat. 26. 41. The spirit is willing*; that is, there is alwaies a willingnesse

Two things in a man regenerate. No naturall man can make an acceptable prayer.

A holy man may make a carnall praier.

Right prayer, what.

Similes

An aptnesse in the regenerate part to prayer. *Mat. 26. 41.*

How the spirit
helpes our in-
firmities.

Rom. 8. 27.
Simile.

Offered up in
the name of
Iesus Christ.

2 Chron. 26.

nesse that followes the spirit, or the regenerate part in a holy man, but, saith he, *the flesh is backward*; that is it that stops this fountain, and therefore Rom. 8. 27. *The spirit is said there to helpe our infirmities, and to make our requests for us*; that is, even as a man removing stones from a fountaine with his hands, makes the water a passage to breake out into a current; so the *Holy Ghost* removes this flesh, which stops up this current, the *spirit* takes away those carnall impediments that are in us: and not onely so, but stirreth up the regenerate part; and when that is done, wee are able to make a spirituall praier unto God in Christ Iesus; So, that is the thing that you are now to observe, that the *Spirit* must helpe our infirmities, when wee come to call upon God, and our prayers be so far acceptable as they be the fruits of the regenerate part; now wee want but one thing added in the definition.

They are such Prayers as are offered to God in the name of Iesus Christ.

This is a thing that you all know, that those prayers that are not offered up in Christ, are not acceptable, because the person is not regarded. It was the sinne of *Vzziah* in 2 Chron. 26. Hee would goe to the Temple himselve being a King on the throne, and he would offer incense without a Priest. Wee doe the very selfe-same thing, whensoever we goe to offer up any prayer to God without Iesus Christ. In the old Law men might bring their sacrifices, but still the Priest must offer them; so must we here, and the reason is given,

The Saints daily Exercise.

11

ven, *Revel. 8.* because the prayers that come from us favour of the flesh; from which they come: and the *Angel of the Covenant mingleth much incense with them*, and makes them sweet and acceptable to God, *with much incense*; that is, as the flesh is more, so there needs more incense, that they may be made acceptable to God the Father. So that we have indeed a double intercessor; one is, *the Spirit that helps our infirmities*, that helps us to make our petitions; that quickens and enlargeth our hearts to prayer: The other is the *Intercessor* to make them acceptable to God, that hee may receive them, and not refuse and reject them. So much shall serve for the first thing; to shew you what the duty is, what a right, true, and acceptable prayer is.

Now for the second, *why we must pray*: For this objection a man may make, the Lord knowes my mind well enough, and what needs such an expression of it by prayer? The reasons briefly why the Lord will have us to pray, are taken;

1. Partly from himselfe.

2. And partly from us.

1. From himselfe though he be willing to bestow mercies upon us, yet he will have us aske his leave before he gives the. As (you know) fathers do with their children, though they intend to bestow such things upon them as are needfull, yet they will have their children to aske them; and as it is a common thing among men, though they be willing a man should passe thro' their ground yet they will have leave asked; because by that

Revel. 8.
Why we must
offer our prayers
in Christs
Name.

Intercessour
double.

2
Why the Lord
will have us to
pray, seeing he
knowes our
wants.

I
In respect of
himselfe.
Simile.

Simile.

To acknow-
ledge his pro-
perty in his
gifts.

Simile.

2
To honour
him.

Simile.

Glory, what,

meanes the property is acknowledged, otherwise it would be taken as a common high way; so the Lord will have his servants come and aske, that they may acknowledge the property hee hath in those gifts hee bestowes upon them: Indeed otherwise wee would forget by what tenure wee hold those blessings we enjoy, and what service we owe to the Lord; as you know there is an homage due to every Lord of a Mannor that hee might be acknowledged of his Tenants; so the Lord will have this duty of prayer performed, that wee may acknowledge that wee hold all of him, and that wee might remember the service we ought to doe him, to rise and goe at his command, that is, to doe his service, which we would be ready to forget, if we were not accustomed to the duty of calling on him.

Likewise he will have it done for his honours sake, he will have men call upon him, that they may learne to reverence him, and likewise that others might be stirred up to reverence him, and to honour him, and to feare him. The servants of a Prince doing honour and reverence to their Lord, stir up those that are lookers on: and as the Scholemen say of glory, Glory is properly this, not when a man hath an excellency in him, (for that hee may have, and yet bee without glory) but glory is an ostentation, a shewing out of that excellency. It is the phrase that is used in the Sacrament, You shall celebrate the Sacrament, that you may shew forth the Lords death; so the Lord will have us come and call up-
on

on his name to shew forth the duty of praier, and that we may shew forth his glory. This is for the Lord himselfe.

Now from our selves, we are to doe it, partly, that the graces of his Spirit may be increased in us: for praier exerciseth our graces, every grace is exercised in praier, and they being exercised are increased. See an excellent place for this in *Iude 20.* *That you may edifie your selves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost;* as if he should say, the way to edifie your selves, and build up your selves, is to pray in the *Holy Ghost*; that is, by spirituall prayer, made through the power, and assistance, and strength of the *Holy Ghost*: Every such prayer builds us up; it increaseth every grace in us; faith, repentance, love, obedience, and feare, all are increased by prayer.

Partly, because they being exercised and set on worke in prayer, are more ready and apt to the performance of this duty than if they should be feldome inured thereto.

And partly also, because prayer brings us to Communion with God. For if the good company of the godly onewith another wil increase grace, how much mote will communion with the Lord himselfe quicken and increase it?

Moreover, this duty is required, that we may be acquainted with God, for there is a strangeness betweene the Lord and us, when we doe not call upon his name. It is the command which you shall finde in *Iob 22.* *Acquaint thy selfe with the Lord, that thou mayest have peace with him, and thou shalt*

2 In respect of our selves.

I
That the graces in us may be increased.

Iude 20.

2
To exercise grace.

3
To bring us to communion with God.

4
To avoid strangeness with God.

Iob 22. 21.

Simile.
How acquaintance is gotten
and lost.

5
To teach us
thankfulness.

Note.
What wee get
without pray-
er, is spent un-
thankfully.

shalt have prosperity. Now, you know how acquaintance growes amongst men; it is by conversing together, by speaking one to another. On the other side, wee say, when that is broken off, when they salute not, or speak not one to another, a strangeness growes; so it is in this: when we come to the Lord, and are frequent, and fervent in this duty of calling upon him, wee grow acquainted with him, but without it wee grow strangers, and the Lord dwells a far off, neither are we able to behold him, except we be accustomed to it, for the more we come into his presence, the more wee are acquainted with him. Therefore that is another reason why wee should use this, that we may get acquaintance with the Lord.

Likewise, that we may learne to be thankfull to him for those mercies we have received from him; for if God should bestow mercies upon us unasked, we would forget them; his hand would not be acknowledged in them; and wee would not see his providence in disposing those blessings that we doe enjoy; but when wee come to aske every thing before him, wee are then ready to see his hand more, and to prize it more, and we are disposed to more thankfulness. So that it is a sure rule commonly, What we winne with prayer, that wee weare with thankfulness, and that which wee get without prayer, wee spend, and use without any lifting up of the heart to God, in praising him, and acknowledging his hand in bestowing it upon us: so you see what this duty is. And,

Secondly,

Secondly, why the Lord will have this duty performed.

Now, thirdly, (in a word) what is it to pray continually? The word in the originall signifieth, such a performance of this duty, as that you doe not cease to doe it, at such times as God requires it at your hands. Compare this with that in the second Epistle to *Timothy* 1. 3. The Apostle saith there, that hee hath him in continual remembrance, praying for him night and day, where the same word is used that is here. Now wee cannot thinke that the Apostle had *Timothy* in continuall remembrance, that hee was never out of his thought; but the meaning is, when hee did call upon God, from day to day, hee still remembered him. So that to pray continually is to pray very much, to pray at those times when God requires us to pray. For it is the definition that Philosophers give of Idlenesse, a man is then said to bee idle, when hee doth not that which hee ought, in the time when it is required of him. He is an idle man that workes not when hee ought to worke; so hee is said not to pray continually, that prayes not when hee ought to pray. In a like manner I conceive this to be the meaning of the Apostle, *Rejoyce evermore, Phil. 4. 4.* so here when he comes to this exhortation of prayer, he contents not himselfe to say, pray very often; but pray continually, as wee use to expresse our selves when wee would have a thing frequently done, wee say, see that you bee alwayes doing of this. So the Apostles scope is

3 What it is to pray continually.

As 2 Tim. 1. 3.

2 Tim. 1. 3.

Idlenesse, what

Obj.

A constant
course of pray-
er, at least
twice a day is
our duty.

Quest.

2 Answ.

The grounds
of it.

1 From the
Text.

2 From Exam-
ples.

1 Cor. 10.
Dan. 6. 3.

3 From rea-
sons.

1 That God
might be wor-
shipped.

to shew that it should be exceeding often, and that it should be very much done. Hence we gather this by the way.

That wee are bound to keepe our constant course of calling upon God, at the least twice a day, whatsoever wee doe more.

But you will say, what ground have you for that, why doe you instance in that twice a day?

The ground of it is this, in that the Apostle bids us pray continually, that is, doe it exceeding much, doe it very often, the least we can doe it, is twice a day, we may doe it oftner, but that, I say, is the least. When we have such a command as this, when wee have such a precept as this, pray continually, and this rule illustrated by such examples as we have in the Scripture, why is it recorded, if it be not true of every example in that kind that is said of the generall example, 1 Cor. 10. They are written for our learning? When it is said that David prayed oft, and Daniel expressly in Dan. 6. 3. He prayed three times a day, that was his constant course, I say, wee may thinke we are bound to doe it at the least twice a day.

Consider also a little the reason of it, why wee are bound to doe it; In the Temple, you know the Lord was worshipped twice a day, there was the Morning and Evening Sacrifice. What was the ground of that commandment? There was no reason of it, but that the Lord might bee worshipped, and that was the time that he would have it done, twice a day, morning and evening, but besides that, it was not only that

that the *Lord* might be worshipped, (wherin we should follow that example of worshipping him morning and evening.) But likewise our occasions are such, that, that is the least we can doe, to call upon him constantly morning and evening: for there is no day but wee use many blessings, and we take many of his creatures. Now we may not take any of them without his leave; so that thou art bound to aske for them before thou take them, and pray for a blessing upon them, or else thou hast no right to them, thou hast no lawfull use of them: that place is plaine, *1 Tim. 4. Every Creature of God is good, and ought not to bee refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by prayer.* So that, if you take common blessings every day, and doe not seeke them at the *Lords* hands before you take them, they are not sanctified unto you, you have not a lawfull use of them you have no right unto them.

Besides, my beloved, it is that which the *Lord* commands in every thing; *Make your requests knowne in every thing*, that is, whensoever you need any thing, make your requests knowne; so in every thing give thanks. And therefore the least we can doe, when we have received, and doe need so many mercies, is to give thanks, and to seeke to him so often, from day to day.

Moreover, doe not our hearts need it, are they not ready to goe out of order, are they not ready to contract hardnesse, are they not ready to goe from the *Lord*, and to bee hardened from *Gods* feare? Therefore this duty is needfull, in that regard,

2
That we may use blessings aright.

1 Tim. 4. 4.

3
From *Gods* command.

4
To keepe our hearts in order.

5
To get forgiveness of
daily finnes

Vse 1.
Shewing the
misery of wicked
men, in
that they cannot
pray.

Note.

gard, to compose them, and bring them backe againe into order.

Lastly, doe not the finnes wee commit daily, put a necessity upon us of doing this, that they may bee forgiven, and done away, and that wee may be reconciled to God againe? Therefore doe not thinke that it is an arbitrary thing to call upon God, twice a day, because there is no particular expresse command; for if you consider these places that I have named, and the reasons, wee shall see there is a necessity lies upon us to doe it. So much shall serve for that, I come now to make some use of this that hath bene delivered.

First, in that such prayers as the Lord accepts, are an expression of holy desires, such desires, I meane, as rise from the regenerate part of a man: Hence then wee see that all naturall men are in a miserable condition, when times of extremity come, & when the day of death comes, whe there is no other helpe in the world, but seeking to the Lord, when all the creatures forsake them, and are not able to help them, & there is no way to go to the Lord but by prayer; if prayer be an effect and fruit only of the regenerate part of a man, wherof a carnall man is not partaker, then he is in a miserable condition. Therefore let such men consider this as put all off to times of extremity. Put the case, thou hast warning enough, at such a time, & hast the use of thy understanding, yet thou art not able to doe any good without this regeneration; for, if there be not grace in the heart, thou art not

not able to make a spirituall prayer to the Lord, such as hee accepts. Therefore take heed of deferring and putting off, labour to be regenerate, to have your hearts renewed, while you have time, and if thou bee not able to call upon God in the time of health, how wilt thou doe it when thy wits, and thy spirits are spent and lost, in the times of sicknesse and extremitie? Therefore let that be considered, which wee doe but touch by the way briefly.

Secondly, if the LORD command this, if it bee the command of God, *Pray continually*: Then take heed of neglecting this duty, rather be exhorted to be frequent; and fervent in it, *to continue therein, and watch thereto with all perseverance.*

It is a common fault amongst us, either wee are ready to omit it, or come to it unwillingly, or else wee performe it in a carelessse and negligent manner, not considering what a command lyeth upon the sonnes of men to performe it constantly and conscionably. I beseech you therefore consider first, that it is a priviledge purchased by the blood of *Iesus Christ*; *Christ* died for this end, it cost him the shedding of his blood, *That wee through him, might have entrance to the throne of grace*: and will you let such a privilege as this lye still? If you do, so far as is in you, you cause his blood to be shed in vaine: for if you neglect the priviledges gotten by that blood, so far you neglect the blood that procured them; but to neglect this duty, is to neglect that. Besides, if we aske you the reason, why you abstain from other sins, why

Vse 2.

Exph. 6.

Motives to prayer.

1
Christ died for this end,

2
It is Gods command.

you steale not, why you commit not adultery, and murther; The reason that you give, is, because the *Lord* hath commanded you. Hath not the *Lord* commanded you to pray constantly, at all times? If you make conscience of one commandement, why doe you not of another.

3
The example
of Saints.
Dan. 6. 10.

Consider *Daniel* in this case, in the 6. of *Daniel*, he would not omit a constant course of prayer, hee did it three times a day, and that was his ordinary custome. If hee would not omit it to spare his life, if hee would not omit it in such a case of danger as that, why will you omit it for businesse, for a little advantage, for a little gaine, for a little wealth, or pelfe, or pompe, or pleasure, or whatsoever may draw you from that duty?

4
The equity
of it.

Doe but consider, what an unreasonable, and unequal thing it is, that when the *Lord* gives us meat and drinke, and cloathes, from day to day, when hee gives us sleepe every night, when hee provides for us such comforts, as wee have need of, so that the least creature doth not us any service; but, as farre as hee sets it on worke to doe that service, for us to forget him, and not to give him thanks, and not to aske these things at his hands, not to seeke unto him, but to live as without *G o d in the world*, as many doe, who neglect this duty: I say, it is a profession of living without *G o d in the world*; wee are strangers to him, it is open rebellion against him. Therefore take heed of omitting it, take heed of neglecting it.

Besides

Besides all this, wee should doe it for our owne sakes, if wee consider what use we have of this dutie for our selves, Is it not the key that openeth all Gods treasures? When Heaven was shut up, was not this the key that open'd it? when the wombes were shut up, was not this it that opened them? You know, *Elijah prayed for raine*, so wee may say for every other blessing. All Gods treasures are locked up to those that doe not call upon his name, this opens the doore to them all, whatsoever they be that we have occasion to use, this is effectual. And this doth it better than any thing besides, If a man be sicke, I will be bold to say, a faithfull praier is more able to heale his disease than the best medicine, *The praier of faith shal heale the sicke, Iam. 5.* You know the woman that had the bloody issue, when she had spent all upon Physicians, and could doe no good, then she came to Christ, and offered a faithfull prayer to him, that did it, when so many yeeres physicke could not doe it. *Beloved*, if there be a Prince, or a great man, whose mind wee would have turned toward us, a faithfull prayer will doe it sooner than the best friends. So it was with *Nehemiah*, you know his request, that the Lord would give him favour in the sight of the man; if wee bee in any strait, as it was in *Iosephs* case, if we have any difficult matter to bring to passe, this prayer and seeking to the Lord, wil expedite, & set us at liberty sooner, it will finde a way to bring it about more than all the wits in the world, because it sets God on worke. You have no power to doe any thing.

5
The benefit of it.

Prayer the key to unlocke Gods treasures.

Iames 5.

Nehem. I. II.

Prevalent
prayer.

Certainly a praying Christian that is prevalent and potent with GOD, (that seekes to him) he is able to do more than all the witches in the world for they set the Devill a-worke, but prayer sets GOD a-worke, it sets him a-work to do us good, to heale us, and to deliver us out of extremities: and therefore, I say, for our owne sakes, even out of selfe-love, and for common comforts, you have need to use this. Certainly, if these things were beleaved, (for you heare them only, you give us the hearing for the time, but if they were beleaved,) many would be more frequent in this duty, they would not be so negligent in it, or come in so carelesse a manner to it.

6
It is the best
way to fill the
heart with joy.

Ioh. 16. 24.

Iames 5. 23.

Phil. 4. 6.

Furthermore, I beseech you to consider this, every man desires joy and comfort, and commonly one thing that keepes us off from this duty, is sports and pleasures, one thing or other, that we take delight in, which dampe and hinder us in these things, in spiritual performances: Prayer is the best way of al other to fill thy heart with true joy, as we see in Ioh. 16. 24. he saith there, *In my name yee have asked nothing hitherto, but now aske, that your joy may be full.* This is one motive that Christ useth to exhort us to bee frequent in this duty, that our joy may be full: which I take to be the meaning of that in Iames 5. *If any man be sad, let him pray,* not onely because prayer is sutable to such a disposition, but likewise it will cheere him up, it is the way to get comfort: *If any bee sad, let him pray.* So it is in Phil. 4. 6. *In all things make your requests knowne, and the peace of God shall keepe*

keeps you in the communion of Iesus Christ: That is it that brings peace, and quietnesse; and therefore there is much reason why we should be constant in this duty, it is that which quickens us, it is that which fills us with joy, and comfort, and with true peace, which every one desires.

Moreover, consider it is thy buckler; praier is the helmet that keeps thee safe; when a man neglects it, when he ceaseth to goe to God by prayer, when he once shewes himselfe to be a stranger to the Lord by neglecting this duty, then hee is out of the pales of his protection, like the conies that goe out of their burrowes; for so is the Lord to those that pray, the Lord is a protection to those that call upon his name. The very calling upon his name is a running under Gods wings, as it were, that is, a putting our selves under his shadow; but when thou neglectest that, thou wandrest abroad from him. Now doe wee not need protection from outward dangers, from day to day? doe we not need to be kept from the inward danger of sinne and temptation? Surely prayer is one part of the spirituall Armour, as we see Eph. 6. In the compleat Armor of God, prayer is reckoned up the last, as that which buckles up al the rest; saith the Apostle, Continue in prayer, and watch to it with perseverance. And you have the more reason to do it, because it is not onely a part of this armour, but it enables you to use all the rest, to use the word, and to use faith, for prayer stirres them up all. What is it to have Armor, and not to have it ready? now praier makes it ready. Therefore you

7
Our safety
consists in it.

Eph. 6.

Prayer teacheth to use the rest of the spirituall armour.

Mat. 26. 41.

Note.

We cannot
love Christ,
but we must
call upon him.

see *Christ* prescribes the same rule in *Mat. 26. 41.*
Pray that you enter not into temptation : as if that
 were the way to secure us, to shelter and to keep
 us safe from falling into temptation. It is a thing
 I would advise you to, to pray, and to seeke to
 the *Lord* continually. Therefore, if wee should
 use onely this one reason to you, to be constant
 in this duty, because it is for your safety,
 it were sufficient. You know, when a man is *as a*
City whose walles are broken downe, when hee lies
 exposed to temptation, he is in a dangerous case.
 So I may use this *Dilemma* to you, if you have a
 disposition, and you think thus, I hope I am well
 enough, I hope my heart is in a temper good
 enough, I am not now exposed to any tempta-
 tion, I feare nothing, make this argument against
 thy selfe, Why doe I neglect so good a gale, if
 my heart be so well disposed to pray, why doe I
 then omit it? Againe, if there be any indisposi-
 tion in me, why doe I hazard my selfe? what if Sa-
 tan should set upon thee? what if the world
 should set upon thee? what if a sutable tempta-
 tion agreeable to thy lusts be offered? art thou not
 in danger? and therefore a constant course should
 be kept in it, we should take heed of being negli-
 gent in it. And will a man now professe that hee
 hopes hee is the servant of *God*, and in a good e-
 state, although he do not pray so much as others,
 (we speak not of frequency simply, but of such a
 performance as is required) I say, to professe that
 thou art a servant of *Christ*, and that thou lovest
 him, and that hee is thy husband, and that thou

art.

art his servant, and yet callest not upon him from day to day, that is an idle thing, it is impossible; if thou diddest love him, thou wouldest expresse thy selfe in calling upon his name. Shall a friend that is an acquaintance onely to us, in whom we delight, but come to us, and wee are willing to spend many houres with him; and shall we profess our selves to bee friends of *God*, and him to be our friend, and that wee delight in him, and yet neglect this duty? This is a common thing amongst you, when you see a man that meditates all his matters himselfe, or if hee doe open his minde, and tell them to some body else, it must be such a one as professeth to be a friend to him; now if this friend should never heare from him, nor hee should never speake to him, or if hee doe, it is in such a negligent manner, as it may appeare, hee doth not trust him, hee doth not regard what hee can doe for him, and hee doth it so shortly, that hee can scarcely tell what the businesse is; I say, in such a case, would you not reckon his profession of friendship to bee an idle and empty profession? Now apply it to thy selfe, those that say they have communion with *God*, and they hope their estate is good enough, they stand in good tearmes with him, but yet, if they be in any necessity, for all the matters and occasions that fall out from day to day, either they thinke of them in themselves, or they are apt enough to declare them to man, or if they goe to *God*, they doe it negligently, they poast over the matter, so as they have

Simile.

If wee bee friends of *God* wee must acquaint him with our state by prayer.

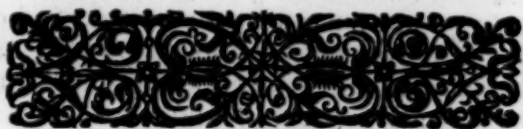
have scarce leasure to expresse themselves and their doings; doe you thinke he will take such for friends? and doe you think, that this is a true, sound, and hearty profession? Therefore (to end this) I beseech you consider it, and take heed of being remisse and negligent in it; for for you see it is a command from the Lord,

Pray continually.

(***)

FINIS!

THE



THE SECOND SERMON.

I THESS. 5. 17.

Pray continually.



NOT to repeat what hath been delivered, but to presse this point on us a little further, (for, what is more necessary, than that wee should keepe a constant course in this dutie, since the very life of Religion consists in it?) I adde this to all I pressed in the morning, that if you doe neglect this duty, it exposeth you to great disadvantage; both for the outward man, and for the inward man; and there are but these two that you need to care for.

For

8

The omission of it doth disadvantage men.

I

In the out-
ward man.*Simile.*

For the outward man, it deprives you of the blessing: put the case you have never so good successe in your enterprizes; put the case you have outward comforts in abundance, yet still the blessing is wanting; and not onely so, but it uncovers the roose, as it were, and the curse is rained downe upon your tables, upon your meat and drinke, upon all the endeavours, and all the enterprizes you take in hand. Wee consider not what we doe, when we neglect this duty, to what danger wee expose our selves unto from day to day; for it is one thing to have outward comforts, and another thing to have the blessing with them.

2

In the inward
man.*Simile.*

Job. 15. 4.

Again, consider what losse you suffer in the inward man, when yee neglect this duty at any time; for that is readie to be distempered, and to goe out of order, it is readie to contract hardnesse, to contract soile, spirituall grace is ready to decay. It falls out with a mans heart, as it doth with a garden that is neglected, it will quickly bee overrunne with weedes, if you looke not diligently to it, and the way to looke to it, is constancy in this dutie. That is a notable place, Job 15. 4. when *Eliphaz* observed some distemper in *Jobs* affections (as he apprehended it) he tels him that the speech hee used was not comely, but vaine, and sinfull: and what then? Surely *Job* (saith hee) *thou restrainest prayer from the Lord*: As if hee should say, It is impossible, *Job*, that thou shouldest fall into these distempers, if thou diddest keepe thy course constantly in this duty; there-
fore

fore surely (saith he) thou restrainest prayer from the Lord; So it is with us, let us restraints prayer from God, and distempers will arise quickly in our spirits, worldly-mindednesse will bee ready to grow upon us, wee shall be apt to bee carnall, we shall forget God, and forget our selves, and forget the good purposes, and desires wee had: and therefore that you may keepe your hearts in order, you must keepe a constant course in this duty: which if you do, though your peace be interrupted, this will repaire it againe, it will make up the breaches againe, though there bee some distempered affections that grow upon us, yet prayer will compose all. As sleepe composeth drunkennesse, so prayer will compose the afflictions: a man may pray himselfe sober againe, nothing doth it sooner, nothing doth it more effectually; and this you shall finde, that as you either omit it, or slight it over, so you shall finde a proportionable weaknesse growing upon the inward man, as the body feels, when it neglecteth either sleepe, or ayer, or exercise: therefore to end this exhortation, I edus be constant in it.

Onely remember this, (when we exhort you thus to keepe a constant course, for which you heard so many reasons in the morning, I say, remember this caution) that if it be performed in a formall, or in a customary and overly manner, you were as good to omit it altogether: for the Lord takes not our prayers by number but by weight: when it is an outward picture, a dead

Inward distempers arise, if prayer bee neglected.

Simile.

Wee were as good not pray at all, as doe it in a formall overly manner.

carcasse

When prayer
is performed
aright.

Simile.

Simile.

Prayer in a cu-
stomary man-
ner, amends
not the heart.

carcasse of prayer, when there is no life, no fer-
vency in it, hee regards it not. Bee not deceived
in this, it is a very usuall deceit; it may bee a
mans conscience would bee upon him, if hee
should omit it altogether; and therefore when
hee doth something, his heart is satisfied, and
so he growes worse and worse: therefore consi-
der, I say, that the very doing of the duty, is
not that which the Lord heeds, but hee will
have it so performed, that the end may bee ob-
tained, and that the thing may bee effected, for
which you pray. If a man send his servant to goe
to such a place, it is not his going to and fro
that hee regards, but he would have him to dis-
patch the businesse; so in all other workes, hee
cares not for the formality of performance, but
would have the thing so done, that it may bee
of use to him: If you let a servant to make a fire
for you, and he goe, and lay some greene wood
together, and perhaps put a few coales under,
this is not to make a fire for you, but he must ei-
ther get dry wood, or he must blow till it burne,
and be fit for use: so when your hearts are unfit,
when they are like greene wood, when you come
to warme them, and to quicken them by prayer
to God, it may bee you pass over this duty, and
leave your hearts as cold, and as discomposed as
they were before: My Beloved, this is not to per-
forme this duty. This duty is effectuallly perfor-
med, when your hearts are wrought upon by it,
and when they are brought to a better tune, and
to a better temper than they were before. If you
find

find sinfull lusts there, your businesse is to worke them out by prayer, to reason the matter, to expostulate the thing before the *Lord*, and not to give over, till you have set all the wheelles of your soule right, till you have made your hearts perfect with *God*; and if you finde your hearts too much cleaving to the world, you must weane them, and take them off; if you find a deadnesse, unaptnes and indisposition in you, you must lift up your soules to the *Lord*, and not give over till you be quickned; and this is to performe the duty in such a manner as the *Lord* accepts, otherwise it is an hypocriticall performance: for this is hypocrisie, when a man is not willing to let the duty goe altogether, nor yet is willing to performe it fervently, and in a quicke and zealous manner: for hee that omits it altogether is a profane person, and hee that performes it zealously, and to purpose, is an holy man; but an hypocrite goes betweene both, hee would doe something at it, but hee will not doe it thoroughly. And therefore, if thou finde that thou hast slubbred over this duty from day to day; that thou performest it in a negligent manner, and perfunctorily, know that it is an hypocriticall performance; and therefore when wee spend so much time in exhorting you to a constant course in this duty, still remember, that you must performe it in such a manner, that it may have heat and life in it, that it may bee acceptable to *God*, and doe good to your owne hearts, to bring them to a more holy frame of grace,

What we must
doe in prayer.

Hypocrisie,
what.

Note.

Object. 1.

This duty requireth much time.

Ans.

Three-fold.

Ans. 1.

The time spent in prayer hindreth not.

Mal. 3. 10.

Simile.

Ans. 2.

It is greater than worldly businessse, and therefore should be preferred.

grace, and to a better temper, than (it may bee) you found them in, when you went about the duty.

And if you object now; I, but it will cost us much time to doe this.

Indeed this is one common cause, among all the rest, that keepes us off from the thorow performance of this duty, but (to speake to that in a word) remember this, that the time that is spent in calling upon God, hinders you not in your businessse, though it seeme to hinder you, and though it takes so much from the heape, yet indeed it increaseth the heape, as it is said of tithes and offerings, *Bring them in*, and thinke not, that because you lessen the heape, that you are poorer men: no, saith the Lord, it will increase your store, *I will open the windowes of Heaven*, and you shall have so much the more for it; so it is true in this case. In other things you see it well enough; You know, the baiting of the horse hinders not the journey, and the oyling of the wheele, and the whetting of the scith, though there be a stop in the worke for a time, yet as our common saying is, *A whet is no let*, and the doing of this is no impediment.

Secondly, put the case it were, yet is it not the greater businessse? what is it that you get by all your labours, and travailes? if it bee riches, it comes not into any comparison with grace and holinesse, with that riches wherewith prayer makes you rich. But, say it bee somewhat more noble than that, as learning, or knowledge; yet what

what is that to the renewing of Gods Image in us? were it not better, to spend time to get grace to make us *rich to God*; to make us to get strength in the inward man, to passe thorow all varieties of afflictions, in getting that which is the chiefest excellency of all others? for is not that the best excellency? When *Adam* was in *Paradise*, the having of *Gods Image*, you know, it excelled all other excellencies in the world; and so it doth still; now the more you pray, the more you get of this *Image*: for a man of much prayer is alwaies a man of much grace, it much increaseth those spirituall gifts, which are better than all the outward things you can get by your imploiment and diligence in them: therefore, I say, though it doe spend you much time, yet know (as *Christ* said to *Mary*) hee that prayes much, though hee bee a great loser in other things, yet he chooseth the better part.

Last of all, consider this, when thou comest to offer sacrifice to God, wouldest thou offer that which cost thee nothing? If thy continuing in prayer, and spending much time in it, should cost thee some disadvantage in thy affaires; & should lose thee that which another gaines, so that thou gettest not so much knowledge, as another man doth, thou doest not so much in thy trade, in thy businesse, thou dost not set things in order, as thou mightest have done; yet know this, that it is great wisdom to make our service to God costly to us; you know *Dauids* choise; *Shall I offer to the Lord that which cost me nothing?* and therefore

What is mans best excellency?

Prayer increaseth Gods Image.

Ans. 3.
We must performe it, though with disadvantage, that our sacrifice may cost somewhat.

hee would needs give the worth to *Aramah* the *Iebusite* for that which he bought; in like manner since it is to a good Master that sees what you doe, that knowes what it costeth, and what losse you are at, and withall that is willing and able to recompence it, why should you shorten this businesse, and possit it over, because of other occasions, and other businesse that you have to doe?

Object. 2.
In respect of
unfitness.

Ans. 1.
God accepts
the will for the
deed, when

1. Cor. 9. 12, 13.

Ans. 2.
The best fit-
ting to it, is to
fall upon per-
formance.

Oh, but a man will say further, I am willing to doe it, but I am unfit for it, and it may be the longer I strive, the more unfit I grow.

To this I answer, first, in generall, if thou doe it as well as thou canst, though thou doe it not so well as thou shouldest, in this case, *God accepts the will for the deed*, when a man puts his strength to it, when there is no indiligence in him, when there is no lazinesse, (for in that case he will not accept the will for the deed, but) when a man doth his utmost, as those that would have given more, and could not, their will was accepted for the deed, in 1. Cor. 8. 12. I say, when thou doest what thou canst, when thou sparest no labour to get thy heart upon the wing, to raise and quicken it, and to enlarge it to this duty; then God accepts it.

But againe, I adde further, there is an unskillfulnesse in going about this duty many times when we are not fit, we thinke to make our selves fitter, by spending time in thoughts, and meditations before, which I deny not, but they may be profitable, but yet this I will propound to you, that

that the best way to fit our selves to this duty, when we finde an indisposition unto it, is, not to stay till wee have prepared our selves by meditation, but to fall presently upon the duty; (I will give you the reason of it) because though a preparation is required for the performance of every spirituall duty, yet, the remote preparation is that which is intended, and meant, when we say we must prepare: for, if we speake of that which is immediate, the very doing of the duty is the best preparation to it. For example, if a man were to runne a race, if he were to doe any bodily exercise, there must bee strength of body, hee must be fed well, that he may have ability; but the use of the very exercise it selfe, the very particular act, which is of the same kind with the exercise, is the best thing to fit him for it: so in this duty of prayer, it is true, to be strong in the inward man, to have much knowledge, to have much grace, makes a man able and fit for the duty; but if you speake of the immediate preparation for it, I say, the best way to prepare us is the very duty it selfe, as all actions (of the same kind) increase the habits, so praier makes us fit for praier; and that is a rule, *The way to godlinesse is in the compasse of godlinesse it selfe*; that is, the way to grow in any grace is the exercise of that grace.

It is a point that *Luther* pressed, and hee pressed it out of his owne experience, and this reason he useth; In this case, saith he, when a man goes about to fit himselfe, by working on his owne thoughts, now he goes about to overcome

Simile.

Exercise of
grace increaseth it.

Note.

Note this expression of *Luther*.

By labouring
against indis-
position by
our owne
strength, we
are more in-
tangled.

Objct.

Ans.
Seven Impedi-
ments in pray-
er, that makes
it difficult.

his unfitnessse by his owne strength, and to contend with Satan alone; but when a man feelerth an indisposition, and goes to God by prayer, resting on God to fit him, hee takes Gods strength to oppose the indisposition, and deadnesse of his flesh, and the temptations of Satan, that hinder him, and resist him. Therefore you shall find this to bee the best way to fit your selves for prayer, namely to performe the duty. If you seeke to expedite, and devolve your selves out of your unfitnessse, by the working of your owne thoughts, commonly, you involve your selves farther into those labyrinths, and are caught more and more. But this I speake by the way concerning matter of unfitnessse: The main answer to this objection is, that which I gave you before, that if a man do what he can, and do it faithfully, and in sincerity, that indisposition shall not hinder him: therefore still remember it must be done, it is not an excuse to us, at any time, nor ought to bee, that wee should omit the duty wholly, under pretence of an unfitnessse.

3. A man is ready to say again, But I find many difficulties, how shall I doe to remove them?

The best way hereunto I can take, is the very naming of the difficulties themselves to you, that you may know them, and make account of them; therefore consider this in generall, that it is not an easie thing to call upon God constantly: our misprision of the duty, our reckoning of it, that it is a more facile and easie thing than it is, makes us more to slight it, and causeth

us not to goe about it with that intension, which otherwise we would, but consider a little what it is. The dutie is very spirituall, and our hearts are carnall, and it is no easie thing to bring spirituall duties, and carnall hearts together.

Then againe, our natures are very backward to come into the Lords presence, partly by reason of his great glory, by reason of his Majesty, who dwells in light unaccessible; and our weake eyes are apt to be dazled with it; and partly out of unaccustomednesse, wee are not used to it, and therefore we are ready to flye from him, as beasts that are wilde, and never were tamed to our hands, are ready to fly from us, so backward is our nature to come into his presence.

Again, the variety of occasions hinders us, every thing keeps us backe, for if a mans heart be cheerefull, it is apt to delight in other things; and if a mans heart be sad (on the other side) if it be a slight sadnesse, men are ready to drive it away with company, and with sports, and with doing other things; But if the sadnesse be great, we are swallowed up with anguish of spirit, and then any thing is easier than to pray; as you may see by *Judas*, it was easier for him to dispatch himselfe, than to goe and call upon God; so it is with men, when they have excessive griefe, when their anguish of heart is exceeding great: so that, whether a man hath a cheerefull disposition, or a sad, whether the sadnesse be great or small, still you shall finde a difficulty. If wee be idle, and have

D 3

nothing

1
Impediment:
Our hearts are
carnall.

Note.

2
Our backward-
nesse to come
into Gods pre-
sence, and
why.

Simile.

3
Variety of oc-
casions hinder
us.

Note.

nothing to doe, our hearts will bee possesse with vaine thoughts, and if we be full of businesse, that distracts us also, and indisposeth us on the other side : so still there are impediments.

4
Worldly cares.

But there is one great impediment, among the rest, and most common, which is *worldly cares*, and worldly-mindednesse; worldly cares hinder spirituall prayer, and spirituall conference, and the holy performance (almost) of every duty; and therefore if you finde a difficulty in it, looke narrowly if that be not the cause.

5
Want of faith
in Gods power
and providence.

When wee are
so backward to
pray to God.

Againe, another great cause of this difficulty in prayer, of such backwardnesse to it, of such indisposition to it, is, because wee doe not well consider the nature of *God*, wee want *faith in his power*, and in his providence; wee doe not consider *Gods* disposing hand, which hath the guidance in every thing that belongs to us, in health in sicknesse, in poverty, in riches, in good successe, and ill successe: for if wee did see the providence of *God*, and acknowledge it more, wee should be ready to call upon him; but this want of faith in his providence, that the *Lord* is not seene in his greatnesse, and in his mighty power, this causeth men to be backward to seeke to him, but very forward to seeke to the creatures. When wee have any thing to doe, of any consequence, wee are ready to post from this man to that man, and from this meanes to that meanes, but very backward and negligent to go to *God* in prayer, to have the thing brought to passe that wee desire, and this ariseth from want of faith, and

and from ignorance of G o d, and our not right consideration of him.

Besides, *Satan* hinders us exceedingly in this duty; for he knowes of what moment it is, and of what consequence, and therefore hee doth as the *Aramites* did, hee *fights not against small nor great, but against the King*; he knowes it is this duty which quickens every grace, it is the greatest enemy which he hath, and if he can keepe us from prayer, hee hath the upper hand of us, hee hath wrested the weapon out of our hands, hee hath disarmed us, as it were, and then he may do what he will with us.

Lastly, the *sinnes* we commit, especially grosse sinnes, they are a great hindrance to this duty, and keepe from the spirituall and cheerefull performance of it: for sinne wounds the conscience, it disjoyneth and dismembers the soule, and a disjoyned member, you know, is unfit to doe any businesse; yea, when the sinne is healed and forgiven, yet there is a sorenesse left in the heart, though some assurance of pardon should follow upon the commission of a great sinne, so that this is another impediment. But I must not stand to reckon up any more, for wee shall finde enow by continuall experience.

The use wee must make of it is, that if the impediments bee so many, and the difficulties that keepe us from a constant course in prayer; and from the performance of it to purpose, so great, then we must put on a resolution to breake through all; and lay it, as an inviolable law upon

D 4

our

6

Satan hindereth.

1 Kings 22. 31.

7

The commission of great sinnes.

Simile,

Vs

What course is to be taken against these impediments.

A new indisposition will be on us daily to prayer.

Note this well.

Removing the objections that are against prayer, doth strengthen us to the duty.

our selves, that we will not alter. Let us thinke with our selves that the thing is difficult, and will cost all the care, and all the intension that may be; yea, when thou hast overcome the difficulties at one time, it may be, the next day, thou shalt meet with new conflicts, new distempers, new affections, new strength of lusts, and a new indisposition of mind will be on thee, and therefore hee that will be constant in this duty, must put on a strong resolution; as it was the saying of a holy man, (one of the holiest men that these latter times had) that he never went to pray to God, but he found so many impediments, that except he bound himselfe by an unalterable resolution, which he resolved not to break upon any occasion, he could never have kept a constant course in it, or, if he had, he should never have kept himselfe from a formall, customary performance of it. But I will adde no more, to presse this upon you, there hath been enough said, I beseech you consider it.

I come now to that I promised in the morning to doe, which is, that which doth exceedingly strengthen us to the performance of this duty of calling upon God, of *praying continually*, (which we are here commanded to doe) viz. is to remove certaine objections, which are in the mindes of men, that secretly weaken the estimation of this truth, and insensibly, take us off, when wee marke them not: for, Beloved, when wee are so negligent in it, surely there is something that is the cause of it, and if wee could finde the cause,

cause, and remove it, wee could not spend an houre better.

The objections, that are commonly in the hearts of men, are many, I will name to you but these foure briefly.

First, a man is ready to say, what need I spend so much time, and be so large in the expression of my wants to God, when hee knowes them? I cannot make them better knowne to him, he knowes them well enough already, and therefore what needeth it?

To this I answer (in a word, because it is an objection that hath not much weight in it) that it is true, the Lord knowes thy wants, but withall, hee will have thee to know them; because otherwise thou wilt not seek to him for them, thou wilt not set a price upon the things that hee bestowes on thee, thou wilt not be thankful to him when he hath granted them; and therefore you shall finde our Saviour Christ useth this very argument, as a meanes to quicken us to prayer, saying, *Your heavenly Father knowes what you have neede of*; what then? Shall we not therefore pray? Yes, saith hee, therefore pray yee the more earnestly, and the more importunately to him: for since he knowes your wants, hee will be more ready to heare your requests.

I, but it will be said again, that he doth not only know them, but he also meanes, and purposeth to bestow them: for he hath made a promise to us, and his promise is firme and sure, and God is just, and must keepe his promise, and when he hath

4 Objections
against prayer.

Obiect. 1.

Ans.
Why God will
have us to pray
though hee
know our
wants.

Math. 6.

Obiect. 2.

Ans. 1.
Though God
purpose to
give blessings,
it is upon con-
dition that we
pray.

1 Kings 18.
41, 42.

a Sam. 7. 11.
a Sam. 7. 18.
Dan. 9.

Ans. 2.
Hee will have
us doe it to
worship him.

To worship
God, what.

hath fully purposed it, what needes so much praying to bring it to passe?

I answer, the promises of *God* are to be understood with this secer condition annexed, I will doe such and such a thing for you, if you pray; though the condition be not alwaies expressed: and therefore we see when *God* promised things in particular, yet still they prayed, and prayed earnestly. When he promised *Elijah* that it should raine, yet, wee see, hee prayed, and contended much in his prayer; so when hee made a promise to *David*, that he would make him an house, yet, you know, *David* went to the house of the *Lord*, & sate before him, and made earnest prayer, as you may see in the second book of *Samuel*: so *Daniel* had a particular promise, yet he praied, & praied long. The example of our Saviour *Christ* is without exception, who had al the promises sure to him, yet, you see, he prayed, yea, he spent whole nights in prayer; and therfore you must understand it, that though you have a promise made, though the thing bee never so sure to you, yet it is to bee understood with this condition, if you call upon *God*.

Now why the *Lord* will have you do it, I shewed you many reasons in the morning, to which we will adde this one: What if the *Lord* will have thee call upon him, though he purpose to doe the thing, even for this end, that thou maist worship him? For, what else is it to worship the *Lord*? you shall finde this usuall in the Old Testament, *The people bowed themselves and worshipped, or they fell upon their faces and worshipped.* The meaning

is this, to worship *God* is nothing else, but to acknowledge the worthinesse that is in him. As when you doe worship to a man, you doe use so much outward demeanor and observance to him, as may acknowledge a worth in him above another man: and as outward gesture, is the outward worshipping of *God*, so the inward worship is inwardly to acknowledge his attributes. Now you shall see, prayer gives an acknowledgement of his Attributes most of any thing: for hee that prayes to *God*, he doth, in so doing, acknowledge his *omnipresence*, and his *omniscience*; that he heares that which the Idols of the *Gentiles* could not doe; that he knowes the secrets of mens hearts, that neither men nor Angels can doe.

Againe, it acknowledgeth his Almighty *Power*, that hee is able to doe any thing; for that is presupposed, when we come and seeke to him.

Thirdly, it acknowledgeth his *Mercy* and his goodnesse; that he is not onely able, but exceeding willing to helpe.

Lastly, it acknowledgeth his *Truth*, that as he hath promised, so, I make account hee will performe it, when I goe and seeke to him; in a word, all the Attributes of *God* are acknowledged in prayer. Therefore, therein you worship him in a speciall manner, when you goe and seeke to him, & pray to him; for in so doing you acknowledge him, yea, you acknowledge him to be a *Lord* and a father; as when we see a childe runne to a man, and aske him blessing, when we see him aske him food:

Prayer acknowledgeth all Gods Attributes.

Omniscience.

Power.

Mercy.

Truth.

Simile.

food, and rayment, wee say, surely such a man is his Father; so this very praying to God, is a worshipping of him, because it acknowledgeth his Attributes, and his relation to us, and ours to him.

Object. 3.

But againe, thirdly, it will be objected, I but, alas, what can the endeavours or the prayers of a weake man doe? can they change the purpose of Almighty God, if hee doe not intend to doe this thing for mee, shall I hope to alter him?

Answe.
God is not
changed by
our prayers,
but our selves.
Simile.

For answer hereto, I say this, in brieft, that when you doe call upon God, hee is not changed by your prayers, but the change is wrought in you; as wee have said to you heretofore, when a Physician is sought unto by his Patient, the Patient desires him earnestly to give him such a cordiall, and such a restorative Physicke, that is pleasing to him, the Physician denies him long, yet in the end, hee yeelds unto it, Why? not because there is any change in the Physician, but because there is a change in the Patient, he is now fitted for this, before hee was not: so then the Physician yeelds now, whereas before he refused; and yet the change is in the Patient, and not in the Physician: in like manner beloved, when you goe about to strive with God in prayer, when you contend, and wrastle with him, (for so we ought to doe) when you use many reasons to perswade him, you alter not him, but your selves: for those arguments that you use, are not so much to perswade him to helpe you,

you, as to perswade your owne hearts to more faith, to more love, to more obedience, to more humility and thankesfulnesse; and that indeed is the reason, why prayer prevayles with *God*, not that the very sending it up is that that prevayles with him, but because a faithfull and spirituall prayer puts the heart in a better disposition, so that a man is now made ready to receive a blessing at *God*'s hands, that before hee was not: And therefore, when you thinke you draw *God* to you, with your arguments; in truth, you draw your selves neerer to him; as when a man in a ship pluckes a rocke, it seemeth as if he plucked the rocke neerer to the ship, when as indeed the ship is plucked neerer to the rocke: so, I say, we draw out selves neerer to the *Lord*; now when wee draw neerer to the *Lord*, in prayer, and there is a spirituall disposition wrought in our hearts, by the exercise of this duty, then indeede the *Lord* drawes neere to us, to send us helpe, and to grant our requests, that wee put up to him; and therefore I say (which you should marke by the way) that every prayer, as it hath a higher pitch of holinesse in affection, and as it hath stronger arguments in it, so it is a better prayer, not because this prayer shall prevayle with *God* more, or, that the excellency of this prayer should move him, but because this pitch of holy affection, and strength of argument workes upon your hearts: for the strength of arguments moves your understanding, and the holinesse of affection puts your will in a frame,

Arguments in prayer are not to perswade *God* but our selves.

Simile.

What prayers are the best.

frame, and so disposeth your hearts, and fits you, as the patient; we spake of before, is fitted, when the Physician is willing to give the thing he desired.

Object. 4.
Twofold.

1

But the last objection, which indeed is more than all the rest, is this;

A man is ready to say, wee see there are many men that doe not call upon *God*, and yet enjoy many mercies: it may bee, a man can say with himselfe, when hee did not use to pray, hee had health, and sleepe, and protection.

2

Againe, on the other side, he hath prayed for such and such things, and yet they have not been granted. So this objection hath two parts, that a man hath obtained blessings, without prayer, and againe he hath prayed, and yet hee hath not obtained the blessings he sought for, at the *Lords* hands.

Answ.

For answer to the first, that men doe obtaine many blessings that doe not pray. (as how many young men are there, and old men too, that have health, and wealth, and peace, and liberty, and abundance of all things, and yet either they seek not to *God*, or if they doe, yet not in a holy and spirituall manner) and therefore this objection had need to be answered; which I will doe with as much brevity as I can.

1

Answer to the first part of the objection.

Answ. 1.

First, though they have these blessings, yet they have them uncertainly, they have no promise of them, they cannot build upon them; whereas they are sure mercies to the righteous man, hee can build upon these blessings: for he hath

hath a father to goe to, whose love hee knowes; and hee hath sure promises to build on; the other, though hee hath them, yet hee is in a slippery place, when he enjoys them; it is an accidentall thing, he hath them from the hand of an enemy, and he knowes not how long he shall enjoy them.

But I answer againe, (which is the chiefe answer to this objection) that there is a great deale of difference betweene having blessings through the providence of God, and betweene having them from the mercy of God, and by vertue of his promise, and out of his love to us in *Christ Iesus*. A naturall man may have many blessings of God, (so God said that he made *Terohaan* a King, hee gave him a Kingdome, and many such passages we shall finde, when men come unjustly to them, as he did to the Kingdome, yet God saith, he did it, that is, it was by his providence) and yet hee hath them not in mercy: for if thou hast these blessings, health and sleepe, and successe in thy enterprizes, from day to day, and yet thy heart tels thee within, that thou hast not sought them at the Lord's hands, as thou oughtest, I say to such a man, (and marke it) it were better for him, that hee should want them: for certainly, when hee hath them, in this manner, he hath them without a blessing; yea, he hath them with a curse, and so had better to be without them, as it had bin better for *Abab* to have beene without his vineyard, and as it had beene better for *Gehazi*, to have gone without his reward, than hee had of *Naab*.

Men that have blessings without prayer, have them uncertainly.

Ans. 2. Difference between having of blessings through the providence of God, and from the love of God.

To have outward things without prayer we were better want them.

men the *Assyrian*, for you know hee had the le-
prosin with it: it had beene better for the chil-
dren of *Israel* to have gone without their Quails;
for you know the curse that followed, death
went along with them; so when a man shall have
peace and prosperity, and abundance of al things
without seeking them at the *Lords* hands, from
day to day, I say, hee had much better want
them; for there goes death together with them.
It is said plainly, that *ease slayeth the foolish*,
(that is to say) this very prosperity, this thriving,
(notwithstanding a neglecting of prayer, and of
holy duties) I say, it carries death along with it,
as the obtaining of the Vineyard brought death
to *Achab*, the getting of the Kingdome was the
destruction of *Ieroboam*, and therefore men have
little cause to comfort themselves with this, that
they enjoy many blessings, and never pray for
them.

Ans. 3.
Many things
bestowed on
wicked men
for the Church
good.

But, to answer this point more fully, I say,
many blessings are bestowed upon men, not for
their owne sakes, but for the Churches sake. A
man may have strength of body, hee may have
great gifts of mind, he may have great successe in
using those gifts, he may bring great enterprizes
to passe; so that you may truly say, the hand of
GOD is with him, all this may be done, not for
his owne sake, but for the sake of the Church, and
glory of GOD some other way, that hee might
doe some service; to this purpose you see, it is
plainly said of *Cyrus*, (*Isaiah 45. 4.*) saith the
Lord there, *For Iacob my servants sake, and for Is-*
rael

1/9. 45. 4.

rael mine elects sake I have called thee by name, and have given thee this great power, and all this great successe, although thou thy selfe have not knowne mee. (Marke) Cyrus was a most prosperous man, Gods hand was mighty with him, and yet all this was not for his owne sake, but for the Churches sake: so you may think it is when men prosper, many times, it is not for their owne sakes, but to fulfill some other end of Gods providence: and therefore, marke this, and keepe it for a rule; If thou properest in thy enterprizes, if thou enjoyest wealth, and peace, and abundance of all things, and art conscious that thou doest not seeke to God, from day to day, that thou keepest not thy heart right and straight, and perfect before him, neither doest call upon him, in an holy and spirituall manner, (certainely it is for one of those causes) thou hast it without a blessing, and with a curse, thou hast it for other ends, and not for good to thy selfe; and therefore thou hast it very uncertainly, it may bee tooke from thee, thou knowest not how soone; yea, and this thou shalt bee sure of, that it shall bee taken from thee then, when of all other times it will bee unfittest for thee: as a theefe comes at a time when men least looke for him, so destruction comes suddenly upon these men: God cuts them, as a man when hee would have trees to die, hee loppes them in that season, that of all others is the unfittest, when the sap is in the tree, and the lopping wil cause them to wither, so the Lord will strike them in a season, that shall bee most

Note.

Simile.

Simile.

E

unfit

Answer to the
second part of
the objection.

Ans.
Our prayers
are oft times
amiss in one
of these three
respects.

First, in re-
spect of the
principle
whence they
flow, when
they are but
naturall de-
sires.

unfit, most unlookt for. It is quite contrary with the Saints, he cures them in due season, hee lops them in due time, when it is best for them, that they may grow the better for it.

But now for the other part of the objection; it may be, many among you are now ready to say, I have prayed for such and such things, and I have beene earnest, and yet the *Lord* hath denyed me. My Beloved, if we can satisfie this objection wee shall then take this impediment away, that wee propound in this objection, which, as I said, hath those two parts. Therefore to this I answer:

First, if thou hast not been heard in thy prayer, consider, whether thou hast not *prayed amisse*; it is a common fault among us, when wee have spent much time in prayer; and it may bee, wee have spent time in fasting and prayer; and the thing is not granted; wee presently lay it upon the *Lord*, that hee hath not heard, when many times the cause is in our not praying as wee ought. It may bee thou hast beene very earnest; and therefore thou hopest thou hast done very well; Tell thee, thou maist be very earnest, and importunate with the *Lord*, when it may bee no more but a naturall desire, as when a man hath need to be directed in a difficult case, that much concerns him; when hee hath need to be extricated, and taken out of such a difficulty, and strait, wherein he is involved; when he hath need of successe in such an enterprise, or any thing of that nature. I say, a man may be earnest with the

Lord

The Saints daily Exercise.

51

Lord in such a case, and yet his prayer may bee amisse, it may not be a spirituall prayer, it may not be an expression of holy desires to the Lord; for they onely prevaile with him: and yet I say not, the naturall are excluded, (that is not my meaning) for they may adde winde to the sailes, though holinesse may guide the rudder, and keep the course, and make the sterage, yet naturall desires may make us more importunate, and may adde much to it: therefore, I say, consider thy prayer.

Naturall desires not excluded in true prayer.

Simile.

Secondly, Consider againe, when thou hast sought so earnestly to God, whether it be not to bestow it upon thy lusts, as the Apostle speakes, *I am. 4. 3.* when thou hast a businesse to be performed, it may bee, thou art earnest with God, but hast thou not an eye to thy owne glory, to thine own praise and credit in it? when thou wast earnest for health, was it not that thou mightest live more deliciously? when thou desirest wealth, and successe in thine enterprizes, that tend to mend thy state, is it not out of some ambition? you know, that desire is condemned, *If any man will be rich;* is it not a desire of greatnesse? would you not be some body in your place, and set up your house and family? Such things indeede God bestowes upon men, but to have our desires pitched upon them, and to pray for them in that sense, is amisse; and my rule for it is in the first to Timothy the sixth chapter, the ninth verse, *If a man will be rich, &c.* that is, when a man desireth excessively more than food and rayment

Secondly, In respect of the end when they are for the satisfaction of our lusts. *I am. 4. 3.*

1 Tim. 6. 9.

When the natural affection degenerates into a lust.

Quest.

Ans.
How to know when we pray to bestow things on our lusts.

Simile.

convenient for him, then certainly the naturall affection is degenerate into a lust; for when any affection exceeds, it ceaseth to bee an affection, and begins to be a lust: and therefore where it is said, *If any man will bee rich, &c.* it is said after, it is a lust.

But you will say, how shall a man know, when his prayer is to bestow that which he prayeth for upon his lusts?

I answer, If a man consult with his owne heart, and deale impartially with himselfe, hee may know what his ends are; but if you cannot finde it out that way, you may know it by the effect, you may know it by the bills you bring in. What is the expence of the things God hath bestowed on you, when hee hath put a price into your hands, consider how you bestow it. If a Steward have a great summe of money that his Master hath trusted him with, and his bills bee, that he hath bestowed so much in riot, so much in fine apparell, &c. but there hath beene but so much bestowed for his Masters advantage, it is an argument he hath spent it ill: so when wee see there hath beene so much health spent, so much time, and so much strength, in following our owne plots, and our owne worldly businesse, without respect to God, not serving God, nor men in our calling, as wee should doe; and that there hath beene little time bestowed in prayer, in reading, in making our hearts perfect with God, in taking paines with them from day to day; I say, if wee thus looke upon the bill of expence,

pence, and consider how wee have bestowed our time, our health, our strength, our wits, from day to day, and our discourse (for that is one price that we have in our hands, by which we may doe good, it is as a Bucket by which wee may draw from others; and likewise it is as a spring, and fountaine, wherewith wee may feed others, with the waters of life;) consider how we have laid out all these things, and by that we may know, how we are disposed to use the blessings wee seeke for at G o d s hands, whether wee seeke them to bestow them upon our lusts, or to spend those gifts to our Masters advantage; and, if wee finde wee doe it for our owne lusts; in this case I say to you goe and amend your prayers, and G o d will amend your speeding. We must doe in this case, as an Angler doth when hee hath throwne the bait into the River, if it stay long, and catch nothing, hee takes up the bait, and amends it, and when he sees it well, hee then continues, and waites; in like manner must every one of us doe; if thou pray, and pray long, and hast not obtained the thing thou praieest for, look diligently to thy prayers, see whether they be right or no; if they be not, amend thy prayers, and God will amend his readinesse to heare thee; if thou finde they be sincere and hearty, mingled with holy desires, and not with carnall and corrupt affections, then let the bait lye still, that is, continue to pray, and to waite, and the Lord will come in due time.

Simile.

Simile.

But this is not all, though it be one maine thing

2

In respect of
the manner,
when they are
uttered care-
lessly.

What moves
God to doe us
good and evil.

Ans. 2.
God grants
our prayers oft
times, yet,

First, not in
that manner,
as we desire.

for besides this, when thou art not heard, consider, if thou hast not prayed remissely, it is a common fault amongst us, when wee succeed not in our prayers, we attribute it to many other things, but not to our remissness and carelessness in seeking to God; if a man want sleepe, if hee finde sickness and weakenesse, and distemper of body, he thinks that he hath eaten amiss, and considers not whether he hath prayed amiss; if a man have miscarried in his business, hee begins to thinke, whether he hath not bene improvident, whether he hath not dealt foolishly, whether he hath not omitted such and such meanes, as hee might have used, hee never thinks whether hee hath prayed amiss or no; when that (perhaps) is the cause of our miscarrying, and not the thing which we commonly attribute it unto: for though God be not the immediate cause, you know hee is the great cause; *There is no ill, that hee hath not done:* that which moves him is alway either grace or sin; as that which moves him to doe us good, is our obedience to him; and that which moves him to the contrary, is neglect on our part.

But to answer further, suppose thy prayers be right, yet this is to bee considered, that oftentimes a man is deceived, in thinking his prayers are not heard; and therefore you must rectifie that misconceit. As for example, sometimes when wee would have the thing in one fashion, God bestowes the same thing upon us in another; and therefore thou maist bee deceived in that; it may bee, a man prayes earnestly, that hee

hee may have a strong body, to doe Gods service withall, when as, perhaps sicknesse of body makes him doe him better service, because it keeps him in more awe, it weanes him more from the world, and makes him more heavenly-minded. You know the case of *Paul*, hee would faine have had that lust taken away that is spoken of, *2 Cor. 12. 9.* and why? surely the thing hee would have had, was, to have his heart in an holy and right frame of grace; now, though *Paul* had not his petition granted that way he looked for, yet hee had it another way, the Lord increased in him the grace of humility by it, hee saw his owne weakenesse, and the power of Christ the more; and when this was discovered unto him, he was content.

2 Cor. 12. 9.

Is it not all one, whether the Lord keeps an enemy from doing us hurt, or that he gives us a strong helmet or buckler to keepe off the blow from wounding us? it may be a man prayes for money, and for estate; if God provide him meate and drink, and cloathes sufficiently, in stead of this, is it not all one? It may be another would have a greater degree of conveniency for his dwelling house, and many other things, if God give him a body able to endure that which is more course, all is one, as if hee were provided for more delicately. It is all one, whether a Physician quench the thirst of his Patient, by giving him beere and drinke that is comfortable unto him, or by giving him Barberries, or somewhat else, that will doe the thing as well: and it is e-

Simile.

quall to the childe whether the Nurse feedes it with milke and other nourishment prepared for it, or gives it the brest which it most desireth: Even so it is all one to thee, whether the Lord answeres thy petition, and gives thee the thing in the very self-same manner that thou wouldest have it; or bestowes it in another manner every whit as well, if not better for thee.

2 Not by those
meanes, which
we propound.

X

Instances.

Secondly, as wee are deceived in the manner, so wee are deceived in the meanes oft times, in seeking to God. When a man prayes, he pitcheth upon such a particular meanes, and thinkes verily that this is the way, or none; yet it may be the Lord will find out another way, that thou diddest never dreame of. *Paul* prayed to have a prosperous journey to *Rome*, hee little thought, that when he was bound at *Jerusalem*, and posted up and downe from one prison to another, God was now sending him to *Rome*; yet he sent him, and sent him very safe with a great company attending upon him, he sent him it maybe in a better manner than hee himselfe would have gone, and yet it was by such a meanes as he could never dreame of. Also you know, *Naaman the Assyrian*, hee had pitched upon a particular meanes, he thought the Prophet would have surely come forth, and have laid his hands upon him; but to goe and wash in *Jordan*, he thought his labour all lost, and his request which hee made to the Prophet to no purpose; for it was a thing that hee never thought of, it was a weake and poore meanes that hee made no account of, yet that was the meanes.

meanes that *God* intended : so I say, wee oft deceive our selves, wee pitch upon such particular wayes, and when these faile us, seeing that wee have prayed that these meanes might bee used, and *God* doth not use them, wee thinke presently it cannot be effected. *Ioseph* thought verily *Pharaohs* steward should have beene the meanes to bring the promise to passe, & after that, *Pharaohs* Butler he used as a meanes, when he desired him to remember him; and yet all this was not the meanes, but another, which he never thought of, which was a dreame of *Pharaohs* : the like was in the case of *Mordecai*, deliverance came a strange way, a way that *Mordecai* never imagined. So *Abraham* thought verily that *Ismael* had beene the sonne of the promise, but *God* tells him hee was deceived, *Isaac* was the sonne, in whom he would make good the promise. So the *Israelites* thought that *Moses* should have delivered them, that it should have beene presently true, that the yoke of bondage should have immediately been taken off from them; but wee see *God* went another way to worke, hee sent *Moses* away into a farre Country, and the bondage was exceedingly increased upon them; so that they thought they were further off now than ever they were before, but in truth, they were neerer : for the increase of the bondage, increased *Pharaohs* sinne, and made him ripe for destruction: Again, it increased the peoples humility, it made them to pray harder, and to cry more fervently to *God* for deliverance, and so it made them more fit for it; and

Wee attribute
too much to
meanes.

and *Moses* at the last was more fitted to bee a deliverer after hee was so long trained up, and was so much humbled; so that when *God* seemes to us to goe a cleane contrary way, yet it is his next way to bring it to passe. *Beloved*, it is a common thing with us, wee pitch upon a certaine particular meanes, wee thinke such a man must doe it, or such a course must doe it, when the *Lord* intends nothing lesse. And the reason often is, because if we should have deliverance, many times by such meanes, by such men, and by such wayes, wee would attribute too much to the meanes. Therefore, we see, while *Gideon* had a great Army the *Lord* would not doe it, it was too great for him; and therefore wee see to what a small number hee brought it: so oftentimes men thinke, oh if I had such a mans helpe, or if I had such a meanes, it would doe the thing, the enterprise would be brought to passe: when we make too much account of it, the *Lord* (it may bee) casts away that, which seemed most probable, and (even as he doth most of his workes, as hee builds his owne Kingdome by the most foolish and improbable meanes of all other, so) often hee doth our businesse by such meanes, that wee least dreame of: therefore bee not discouraged. Suppose we pray, that such a great Prince should raise the Churches, that such a warre, that such an enterprise, and project may doe it; put the case the *Lord* will not doe it so, are wee then presently undone? and is there no helpe, because such a battaile

battaile is overthrowne, because such a King did not succeed, because such a Generall had not successe according to our expectation? It may bee that is not the way, the *Lord* will helpe the Church after another manner, than wee dreame of; and so for a mans selfe, hee hath a great businesse to bee done, or hee is in distresse, and would have deliverance, and hee thinkes this is the way, or none; and therefore hee is earnest to have it done: now it is good, in this case, to leave it to the *Lord*, to make our requests knowne to him; and when we have done that, to bee no further carefull, but leave it to the *Lord*, to doe it his owne way; for hee is most skilfull.

If you take a skilfull Workeman, and say no more to him but thus: Sir, I pray you doe mee such a thing, if it were the bringing of water, or the setting up of a building, it may bee, hee will goe a way to worke, that thou knowest not what it meanes, and yet thou wilt trust him: why then wilt thou not trust *God*, and suffer him to goe his owne way? for when thou art crossed in that thing, wherein (it may bee) of all others, thou wouldest not be crossed, perhaps that same is the best way of all other, to bring the thing to passe that thou desirest.

Thirdly, as wee are deceived in the manner, and the meanes, so likewise wee mistake the time: it may bee the *Lord* is willing to doe the thing, but not in that time that thou wouldest have him. When a man prayes to bee delivered

Simili.

Thirdly, or not
in our time.

Simile.

Wee must not
take Gods de-
layes for de-
nials.

Note.

Why God de-
ferres to an-
swer us.

Note.

vered from such trouble, from such a distresse and affliction, hee thinks the time very long, and saith, hee is not heard, because hee is not delivered presently : wee would all have the smarting plaister presently tooke off; but the LORD is wiser than wee, (as the Physician knowes what belongs to the Patient better than himselfe) though hee doe it not presently, yet hee will doe it in his good time. Therefore say not, thou art not heard, thou must take heede of taking delayes for denyals, the Lord will deferre to doe the thing, yet hee will doe it, and doe it in the best season : for this is a generall rule, *Gods time is the best time.* When thou comest to pray for a thing, thou wouldest have it done presently, and thou thinkest it is the best time, all the controversie betweene GOD, and thee is, which is the fittest time to have it done, thou thinkest perhaps presently; God againe (it may bee) will doe it a yeere hence; surely he is the best chooser, and wee shall finde it so; and therefore be content to wait his leasure : For he may have many ends in deferring it, it may bee to try thy faith, (as hee did the faith of the *Canaanite*, whom therefore hee would not heare;) it may be to increase thy holines, to put thy heart into a better temper, and therefore hee defers longer. Hee meant to doe that for *Jacob*, that hee did, yet hee suffered *Jacob* to *wrestle all night*, and yet hee would not doe it till the instant of the morning appeared : so it was with *Daniel*, the an-
swer

swer went forth when hee began to pray, yet hee would have him instant, and continue in prayer; so (I say) the *Lord* may have many ends why hee deferres, let us therefore bee content to take his owne time.

Last of all, consider this when thou seekest to the *Lord*, to have any thing done, it is possible that it may crosse some other passage of his providence; and in this case thou shouldest be content to be denied.

But, you will say, why may not both bee accommodated?

I answer, so they shall, though thou see not how; for it is not with *God* as it is with man: if a man doe a good turne to one, two being earnest petitioners whose well-being wholly depends on the successe, hee must needs doe an ill turne to another; but *God* composeth all for the best. As for example, *David* desired exceedingly to build a Temple; yet the *Lord* had another end, for hee had resolved in his providence to make *Salomon* the builder of it, which indeede was much better for *David*: for what more than hee had could *David* have gotten, if he had done it? seeing the *Lord* gave him as full a reward, as if he had done it: for he tels him, that for that purpose of building *God* an house, he would build him an house: so that *David* had his end to the full, though *Salomon* did build the Temple. In like manner in the Land of *Canaan* amongst the *Israelites* the *Lord* kept the *Canaanites* but it was for their profit to exercise them, and keepe them in feare;

Ans. 3.
Our prayers
may crosse
some passage
of Gods provi-
dence.

Object.

Ans.

Simile.

fear, lest at any time they should forget him. So also wee finde by experience, there are some passages of Gods providence, that if wee knew, we would willingly yeeld to, in that it were better, that it should be so, than otherwise, and therefore it is better, in some case, that we should bee denied.

FINIS.

THE



THE THIRD SERMON.

1 THESS. 5-17.

Pray continually.



Now wee proceede to that which
remaines; for something more
wee may adde to the demonstra-
ting the time of Gods granting
our petitions, and the measure
of satisfying them, which wee
toucht a little before.

For the time, wee are deceived in that wee
thinke, when God deferrēs he deniēs; for many
times God deferrēs for speciall reasons, and yet
he grants the requests, in the fittest time for us, as
the Physician knoweth the fittest time to give the
Patient phycke of one kind or another; and in
this

See page 59.

Simile.

Simile.

Rev. 2. 10.

Note.

Four reasons
of Gods defer-
ring to grant
our requests.

To try our
faith.

To humble us
more.

this wee must yeeld to GOD; as hee doth all his
workes in the fittest time, so hee grants our pe-
titions in the fittest time; there is an appointed
time for any deliverance to bee granted, for any
blessing, for any comfort that wee need, and ex-
pect from his hands. Now, if our selves did right-
ly see it, wee would have things done for us in
the most inconvenient time, wee would have the
smarting plaister pulled off, before the wound be
healed, whereas it is best for us to have it kept
on: *Beloved, you shall finde, that God divides be-
tweene Satan and us, in this case, as we see Revel.*
2. 10. Satan shall cast some of you into prison, and
you shall bee there for tenne dayes: it was not so long
as Satan would have had it, it may be, he would
have had it tenne and ten too; nor againe, it was
not so short as God would have had it, but God
sets downe the time betweene them both: and
therefore we must rest upon him, and thinke that
many times there is great reason, why we should
be deferred, when wee aske things at his hands.
Now you shall find God defers for one of these
causes, for the most part:

Sometimes, for the tryall of our faith, as wee
see, he deferred to grant to the woman of *Canaan*,
although he did meane to grant her request, yet
hee deferred long, that he might put her to the
tryall: and you see, shee was no loser by it, but
when she held out in her prayers, she had her re-
quest granted to the full.

Sometimes, hee defers to grant it, that wee
may be more humbled, as you know, *Paul* prayed
earnestly

earnestly, but *God* told him, that hee would deferre him, because he needed more humility : so he deferred to grant the request; that the men of *Israel* put up to him against *Benjamin*, when the cause was just, and *God* intended to helpe them, yet they fell before their enemies twice, though they fasted and prayed ; his end was, as we see in the Text, that they might be more humbled, that their hearts might be more broken, that they might be more fitted to receive it.

Againe, sometimes *God* defers, that we might be more able to use those blessings that he means to bestow upon us: so he deferred to raise *Ioseph* to preferment ; so hee deferred to bring *David* to the Kingdome; that those afflictions that they endured might the better fit them to enjoy so great prosperity, as he had provided for them afterwards.

And lastly, he defers, that he might set a higher price upon his blessings, that hee might inhaunce the price of them ; as the fisher drawes away the bait, that the fish might follow it the more : so *God* with-holds blessings, that wee might have a greater edge set upon our desires, that wee might pray harder for them, that wee might prize them more, when we have obtained them.

Now, as he doth thus for the time, and as we are often deceived in the time, in taking delayes for denials ; so likewise wee are often deceived in the measure : many times *God* grants the things that wee would have, but because wee

F

have

3

To enable us to use his blessings when we have them.

4

To make us to prize his blessings.

Simile.

Concerning the measure, if *God* give us not so much as we aske.

have not so large a measure as we expect; therefore wee thinke we have it not at all, and that the Lord hath denied us our prayers, when indeed hee hath not, for a lesser measure, many times, may serve as well as a greater: as God saith to Paul, *My grace is sufficient for thee.* Though the temptation doe abide upon us, if there be sufficient grace to keepe us in a continuall conflict, and warre against it, if there be sufficient grace to obtaine pardon, to uphold, and to comfort us in it, it is enough, it may bring us to heaven; wee have a deliverance from it, even when we seeme not to be delivered, though wee have not so full a victory, as wee would have, yet that grace may be sufficient.

A lesse measure may serve as well as a greater.
Cleared in In-
stances.
1 Wealth.
Psal. 37. 16.

You shall see this almost in all the things we have occasion to request at Gods hands, that a lesser measure may serve as well as a greater. Take it first in outward things.

A little wealth may serve as well as great revenues, as in *Psal. 37. 16.* *A little that the righteous hath, is better than the great revenues of the wicked:* because a little, when God shall fill it with his blessings, it shall serve the turne as well; but, if a man hath great revenues, and God blowes upon them, and leaves an emptinesse in them: if a man have great revenues, if hee have great outward comforts, yet if there be an emptines if there be a vanity in them, if they be as the huske without the graine; as the shell without the kernell, as they are often; though there bee a great bulke, and they seeme very fit to comfort us, yet they will

Simile.

will doe us little good; whereas a little, on the other side, with Gods blessing, wil do much good: for in this case it is as 'twas with *Manna*, *Those that had little, had sufficient, and those that gathered o-ver, had never a whit the more*; that is, for their use and comfort. You know, the little that *Daniel* had, it nourished and strengthened him, as much as the great portion of the Kings meat, that others had; and therefore a little, in this kind, may serve as well as much.

And so likewise, a little grace may be so used, and improved, that it may enable you to doe much, it may preserve you from sinning against God, as well as a great measure. For the confirmation of this, looke to *Rev. 3. 8.* which is a notable place for this purpose: it is said there to the Church of *Philadelphia*, *Thou hast a little strength*, they had but a little strength, and yet you see there what that little strength did: *Thou hast but a little strength, and yet thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name*: There were but two things for them to doe, to keepe his word, and to be kept from running out to the deniall of his name, and committing other sins: now the little strength they had, was sufficient for these ends. So that we see, he findes no fault with that Church; other Churches, that had more strength, it may be, they fell into greater sinnes. But this is a rule which is true, you will find it true in all observations through the Scriptures, That sometimes those that have great grace, notwithstanding fall into great sinnes, they may be subject to some

a Instance, in grace.

Revel. 3. 8.



Those that have more grace may fall, when weaker ones stand.

Note in what
sense this is to
be taken.

Revel. 3.

3 Instance in
gifts.

Simile

Simile.

strong prevailing lust; as *David*, you know, had a great grace, and yet, wee see, he was subject to great sinnes together with it.

And againe, a man may have but a little grace, and yet that little grace may be so ordered, and husbanded, and improved, that that little grace may keepe him from sinne, more than the other. This must bee warily understood, not but that great grace enables a man to doe greater workes than the other, it enables a man, in the ordinary course, to resist greater temptations, more than lesse grace; but yet, (I say for our comfort, that) though a man have but a little strength, as it is said in the place newly mentioned, *Rev. 3.* in that little strength, *I have set a doore open to thee*; it opened the doore of heaven wide enough, so that no man could shut it.

And as wee say of grace, so likewise for gifts; smaller gifts, meaner gifts may serve the turne many times, as well as greater gifts: for (you know) a little finger, a small hand, may serve to thread a needle, as well as a greater, and (it may be) will doe it better; for in the Church there are varieties of operations, and variety of functions, and meaner gifts may serve for the discharge of some operations, of some services for the Church as well as greater. And therefore, as there are variety of functions, so there are variety of members, some stronger, some weaker, and the weaker may serve, in some cases, as well as the stronger; a little Barke may doe better in a small river, than a greater shippe; so a man that hath

hath but meane gifts, may serve meane capacities, at well as greater and better : and therefore thinke not that things are denied, when the thing is granted, not in such a measure as wee desire. Lastly, to be faithfull in a little gift will bring as great a reward, as to be faithfull in greater. *Thou hast bin faithfull in little, may make a man ruler over much, & may bring a great increase of the talents after : Therefore let not a man be discouraged, if he have not so great a measure as others have.*

So likewise if a man desire patience & strength to goe thorow all variety of conditions, thorow all the troubles he meers with : as sometimes the Lord layes a great burthen upon a mans shoulders, and gives him great strength to beare it; sometimes againe he gives but a little strength, and then hee proportions the burthen to it; for is it not all one, whether the burthen bee great, and the strength answerable, or the burthen be lesse, and the strength little? Sometimes hee takes away calamity quite, sometimes he laies it upon a man, and gives him as much strength as enables him to beare it, and that is as good as if it were removed; else, what is the meaning of that, *You shall have an hundred fold with persecution,* but that you shall have so much joy and strength in persecution, that it shall be all one as if you wanted it? So wee see *Heb. 5. 7.* when *Christ* prayed for deliverance, in that great houre of triall, the Text saith, *Hee was heard in the things hee feared;* and yet, we see, the cup did not passe from him, but onely hee was strengthened to beare it,

Faithfulness in little brings as great a reward as in more.

4 Instance, in crosses and afflictions.

Simile.

Heb. 5. 7.

Note.

Dangers of omitting, or neglecting prayer.

1

and so it is in this case. All which may serve for a full answer to that, that wee be not mistaken in judging our prayers not to bee heard, when they are heard.

And now, *Beloved*, what remains but that wee set our selves to the duty, to doe that we are exhorted unto heere, namely to *Pray continually*, that is, to pray very much, to keepe at least a constant course in it; for first, if we doe neglect it, we doe but robbe *God* of his mercies, we take them without his leave.

2

Againe, we are guilty of the sinne of unthankfulness: for we ought to *give thanks in all things*.

3

Besides, we neglect his worship; for you know prayer is a part of his worship, and the neglect of it from day to day, or at any time, when we omit it, is a neglect of that worship and service we owe unto him.

4

And moreover, we doe not only suffer sinne to lye unforgiven, which is very dangerous, but also

5

wee deprive our selves of blessings; and bring a curse upon us; nay wee suffer our hearts to grow

6

hard, and to be distempered: for from our neglect of prayer comes that deadnesse of spirit, that worldly mindednesse, and unaptnesse to pray, to heare the word, and to keep the Sabbath: for what else is the reason, why those that have beene forward and zealous professors, in former times, have lost their light, and fallen from their place; I say, what is the reason of it; when they were sometimes fervent in spirit serving the Lord? but because that fire was not kept alive with the fuel of pray-

Why mendecline in their grace.

cr;

er; and when they declined from that pitch, from that degree of faith, which they had obtained, you shall finde that it did commonly arise from remissness in this duty. Therefore we say to such, *Repent, and amend, and doe your first workes*; that is, use your former diligence, renew that, and that will renew grace and strength againe: therefore take heed of being negligent, and remisse in this duty. Wee have great cause to be encouraged to it, for there is not a faithfull prayer that we make shalbe lost, but they come up into remembrance. And therefore you must consider with your selves, not onely what you doe for the present, but what stocke of prayers you have laid up. You know, a man may have much in bills and bonds, as well as in present money; so there is a certaine stocke of prayer, a certaine treasure laid up, that shall not be forgotten. The husbandman looks not only upon the graine that he hath in his garner, but hee looks upon that which is sowne, though it be out of his hand, yea, he reckons that the better of the two; so those prayers that have beene sowne, (it may be, many yeeres agoe) are such as will bring in a sure increase. Therefore let us be exhorted to be constant in this duty, to be frequent therein, to *continue in it, watching thereto with perseverance.*

And now wee have dispatched this wee will come to answer some cases of conscience that fall out in the performance of this duty, which are divers.

First, that is one; What shall a man judge of his

Benefit of frequency, and diligence in prayer.

No faithfull prayer is lost.

Simile.

Simile.

Nine cases of conscience concerning prayer.

Case 1.

About wand-
ring thoughts
in prayer.

his prayers, when they are accompanied with wandring thoughts, whether those prayers are such as God wholly refuseth, or what he is to doe in such a case, when hee is subject to wandring thoughts, to vanity of minde, and distemper in the performance of that duty?

Answ.

To this I answer, that wee must distinguish of the cause whence these wandring thoughts arise.

I
The cause of
them is weak-
nesse.

Simile.

Sometimes they arise, not so much from our owne neglect, as from weaknesse, from temptation; and in such a case God layes them not so much to our charge. As for example, one that aymes at a marke, and doth his best to hit the marke, yet, if hee hath a hand, or an arme, that hath the palsie in it, or if one jogge him while he is about it, the fault was not so much in him, it was not want of good will to doe it, nor want of diligence; but either it is his weaknesse, or it is an impediment cast in by another: so it is in this case, this wandring of mind proceeds from a naturall infirmity and imbecility that hangs upon the nature of man, which is not so able to keep it selfe close to such a spirituall businesse: and this God considers, for he is wise, and knoweth that we are but flesh. When a weake servant goes about a businesse, though hee doe it not so well as a stronger, yet a man is wise to consider, that the servant is but weake: in like manner the Lord considers the naturall weaknesse that wee are subject unto, and he deales mercifully with us, in such a case: for herein a man is as one that hath a bow in his

Simile.

his hand, but he hath a palsey-arme, and therefore he cannot keepe it steddy, though he have a mind to doe it.

So also in the other case is it, when he is jogged in his shooting by another, that is, when Satan interrupts him, who is alwayes diligent to hinder him in such a duty; in this case, *God* chargeth it not upon him, neither doth he cast us off, nor reject our prayers because of that.

But on the other side, when this wandring of mind shall rise from meere negligence on our part, from profanenesse, from want of reverence, because we do not intend holy duties as we ought, we come not to them with that conscionableness, with that carefulnesse as we should doe; in this case it is a great sinne, and this moves the *Lord* to anger, when we performe that duty in that manner, when wee doe not so much as set our selves about it with our strength, but suffer our mindes to wander without any resistance.

Or secondly, when wee our selves be the cause of it, by admitting of loose thoughts, by suffering our selves to be worldly minded, by suffering an indisposition to grow upon us, and not laboring to resist it, and cast it off againe. You know, when an instrument is out of tune, if the lesson be never so good that is played upon it, yet it is unpleasant, because the instrumēt is out of tune; and whose fault is that? So, when thou comest to *God*, and sufferest thy heart to bee distempered before, and doest not looke to keepe it in order, that is thy sin, as well as thy profanenesse and

2 Temptation

3 Negligence.

4 Voluntary
admitting of
vain thoughts.

Simile.

How to prevent wandering thoughts in prayer.

Simile,

Case 2.
About indif-
posednes, and
dulnesse, and
unaptnesse to
prayer.

Answer.

Object.

Answer.

and neglect in the very time of the performance.

And by this you may learne, how to judge of wandring thoughts in the performance of this duty, and likewise you may see how to prevent them. The way to prevent them, is first, to keepe our hearts in tune before, to have them ready, as *the wise man hath his heart at his right hand*; that is, he hath it ready when he hath it to use. When a man is to use his horse, he doth not suffer him to runne up and downe in the pastures wildely, but will have him under bridle; so we should keepe our hearts in frame, that they may be ready to do us service in such an holy duty, when wee have need of them.

Secondly, we must be diligent, when we come to performe the duty, that though our minds do wander, yet we may be ready to recall them presently, to set our selves to it with all diligence. So much for answering of this first case.

The second Case is, what a man is to do, when hee findes a great indisposition to prayer, such a dulnesse and deadnesse in him, that hee knowes not how to goe about the duty, and he thinks, if he doe it, it were as good be undone.

To this I answer briefly, that in all such cases, a man is bound notwithstanding to performe it, let his heart be never so much out of temper, let ther be never so great a dulnesse, and deadnesse of spirit upon him, yet he is bound to doe it.

But you will say, Why, but I am altogether unfit.

I answer, That a man by setting himselfe upon
the

the worke shall gather a fitnessse, though he were unfit at the first. You know, members that are benumbed, yet by using them, they get life and heat, and come, in the end, to be nimble enough; so it is with the heart, in this case, when it is benumbed, the very using of it makes it fit for the duty. You know, wood, though it be greene, yet, if it be long blowed, at the length it will be dry, and take fire; so it is with the heart, a man may bee long about getting it on the wing, yet with much adoe he may do it; and therefore he ought to doe this duty in such a case; yea, so much the rather, because there is never more need of calling upon God, than at such a time: for then a man lyes most exposed to temptation, then, if any sinne come, he is ready to be overtaken with it, he is unfit for any thing: and therefore, if ever he have need to call upon God, it is at that time.

But you will say, It may be God will not accept it.

I answer briefly, Although a mans heart be so indisposed, that when hee hath done all hee can, yet hee can get no life, hee can get no heat in the performance of such a duty, yet God may accept that prayer, as well as that which is most fervent. And that you may understand this aright, you must take it with this distinction: for alwayes this dulnesse and deadnesse in praier, comes from one of these two causes.

One is, when God withdrawes his owne Spirit, that is, withdrawes not his spirit altogether; (for there may be an helpe, when wee perceive it
not,

Simile

Simile.

Never more
need to pray,
than when we
are most indis-
posed.

Note.

Object.

Ans.

*Causes of dul-
nesse.*

From negli-
gence,

When indispo-
sition is no
hinderance.

Case 3.
About praying
after a man
hath commit-
ted some grosse
sinne.

not) but when he withdrawes the livelineſſe, and quickneſſe of his ſpirit; and in this caſe, if we doe our duty, if wee doe the beſt wee can, the *Lord* doth accept it, though hee hath not vouchſafed ſuch enlargement of our hearts, though hee hath not powred out his ſpirit upon us, in the performance of the duty, as at other times, but he gives a ſecret helpe, that perhaps we feele not, nor per- adventure is ſo great as at other times; yet I ſay, when it ariſeth from his own withdrawing of that ſinneſſe, and wee our ſelves are not negligent (which is the other cauſe) but endeavor as much as we can to doe our beſt, in this caſe *God accepteth the wil for the deed*; as I have often ſaid to you that rule alway holds good, when the impediment is ſuch as we cannot remove, when the dulneſſe of ſpirit is ſuch as it is not in our power to remove it, though we have uſed our utmoſt diligence, in that caſe it is no hinderance. And therefore it is a great comfort unto us that we have uſed our diligence in this duty, and have imployed our beſt ſtrength to quicken our hearts, though it be not done, yet *God* accepts our prayers, as well as if they were performed in a more lively and fervent manner.

The next caſe is, what a man is to doe after he hath committed ſome great ſinne, after he hath wounded his conſcience, whether then, notwithstanding hee muſt come, and keepe his conſtant courſe in praying, morning and evening; whether he ſhalbe ſo bold, as to come into *Gods* preſence, after he hath ſo exceedingly offended him.

To

To this I answer, that a man is bound (notwithstanding any sinne that he hath committed, be it what it will bee,) to keepe this course constantly in prayer, and not to omit it, not to keepe off, not to deferre it. And my ground for it is, because this is a duty, it is a charge that *God* hath laid upon all, to *Pray continually*; that is, at the least twice a day, as we shewed before, to keepe a constant course in it. Now it is certain, our failing in one thing must not excuse us in another: when the duty lies on us, wee have no dispensation to be negligent in it; and therefore wee are bound to doe it.

Againe, consider this, that a particular offence doth not offend so much, as if we grow strangers to *God*, as if wee grow to a generall rebellion against him. As, put the case, a child commits a great offence against his father, yet, if he runne away from his fathers house, and grow a stranger to him, that is more than the particular offence; for a generall rebellion must needs be more than the particular. And to give over calling upon *God*, to breake off that course, to grow a stranger to him, to runne away from his house, and (as it were) to be ready to give over all his ordinances, and a constant course of obedience to him, this is a generall rebellion, and is worse than the particular; yea such a carriage, after sinne committed, moves *God* to anger more than the sinne it selfe: as many times, the contemptuous, negligent, rebellious carriage, after an offence, moves a master, a husband, or a parent more than the particular

Ans^w.
In this case,
prayer is not
to be neglected.

Reason 1.
It is Gods
command.

Note.

Reason 2.
Neglect in this
is worse than
the sinne wee
committed before.

Quodlibet.

Reason 30
it leaves the
breach in the
conscience o-
pen.

If we recover
not quickly
out of a sinne,
we adde more
to it.

Quest.

Answ.

cular failing though it were exceeding great.

Besides, consider when a man commits a great sinne, he makes a great gappe in his conscience, he makes a great breach there, and will you have that breach lye open? is not that very dangerous? is not that the way to bring in more sinne, and to suffer those good things that are in the heart to steale out? I will give you but one instance for this: You see, *S. Peter*, when he had committed a great sinne, in denying his Master, and forswearing of him too, yet, because he came in presently, and repented, and sought for pardon, (as you know he did,) he was graciously preserved from running into further arrerages; for hee made up the gappe, hee made up the breach by his true repentance.

Wee see, on the other side, when *David* had committed that sinne with *Bathsheba*, and did not come unto *God*, as he should have done, to keepe his ordinary course in sacrificing unto him, in repenting, and renewing his repentance, and praying to him, you know, how many sinnes hee fell into. And likewise that was the case of *Salomon*, you know, to what a height he grew, by not coming to *God*, at his first failing: And therefore, I say, there is reason, that we should do it; though the sinne be never so great we ought to come in, and to keepe our course constantly.

But may I not stay till I be more fitted, till my heart bee more softened, and more humbled?

Beloved, to stay in this case is dangerous, for the

the heart commonly growes more hard in sin by continuance; the conscience is more tender immediately after the sinne is committed, than it is afterwards; and when thou stayest for more humility thou findest lesse: And therefore, while the wound is greene, and when the fire hath taken newly hold, it is then best to quench it, before the wound be festered, before it hath continued long; for the heart will grow worse and worse, as it is *Heb. 3. 12.* *Take heed that you be not hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne:* The meaning is this, when you commit a sinne, you thinke, if you stay a weeke, or a fortnight, or a moneth, you shall come in as well as at the first; no, saith the Apostle, *while it is to day* come in, that is, do it presently, for sinne will deceive you, it will harden your heart before you be aware, it will make a distance between *God* and you, it will take you off from him, it will leade you further on: and therefore take heed, that your hearts be not hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne that sinne doe not deceive you, which it will doe before you thinke of it. And therefore in this case you should doe as you do with waters; when waters breake out a little, it is best to stop them presently, if you suffer them, they will make the breach greater, till at length you bee unable to stop them; so in this case, when you have committed a great sin, come in speedily, before the wound grow incurable.

But you wil say, What, shall a man come into *Gods* presence, who is most holy, after he hath defiled

Staying for fitness after sin committed, we become more unfit.

Heb. 3. 12.

Simile.

Object.

Ans.

We must come
to God with a
disposition
turned from
sinne.

filed himselfe with some great sinne; is not this an unreverent thing?

I answer briefly, it is very true, if thou be bold to come into *Gods* preience with the same disposition wherewith the sinne was committed, with a minde so fashioned, and so framed, in that case thou dost exceedingly provoke him, this is a very high degree of profanenesse: and therefore, when wee say, thou must come in, and keepe a constant course in prayer notwithstanding, the meaning is, you must come in with a disposition turned aside from your sins, and brought home to *God*, with a minde to abhorre that which is evill, and to cleave to that which is good, there must bee this conversion of the minde to him, thou must not come in with the same disposition, that must be altered. So much shall serve for the answer to this case.

Case 1.
About a set
forme of pray-
er.

Ans.

Another case is, whether wee may use a set forme of prayer; and likewise whether it be sufficient?

I need not say much to you, for I thinke there is none here that doubt of it, but that a set forme of prayer may be used: you know, Christ prescribed a forme, you know, there were certaine *Psalmes* that were prayers, that were used constantly; and therefore there is no doubt but that a set forme may be used, for we have those and other examples for it: And in the Church, at all times, both in the primitive times, and all along to the beginning of the reformed times, to *Luther* and *Calvins* time, still in all times the Church had

had set formes they used, and I know no objection against it of weight. One maine objection is this:

That in stinted prayer the spirit is straitned, when a man is tyed to a forme, then hee shall have his spirit (as it were) bounded and limited, that hee cannot goe beyond that which is prescribed; and therefore, say they, it is reason a man should bee left to more liberty, (as hee is in conceived prayers,) and not tyed to a strict forme.

To this I answer, even those men that are against this, and that use this reason, they doe the same thing daily in the congregation: for when another prayes, that is a set forme to him that heares it; I say, it is a forme to him: for put the case, that he which is an hearer, and doth attend another praying, suppose that his spirit bee more enlarged, it is a straitning to him, hee hath no liberty to goe out, he is bound to keepe his minde intent upon that which the other prayeth: And therefore, if that were a sufficient reason, that a man might not use a set forme, because the spirit is straitned, a man should not heare another pray (though it be a conceived prayer) because, in that case, his spirit is limited; it may bee, the hearer hath a larger heart (a great deale) than hee that speakes and praies: so that there is a bounding, & straitning, and a limiting of the spirit to him. And therefore that reason cannot be good.

Againe, I answer, though the spirit be limited, at that time in publike, yet he hath a liberty at o-

G

ther

Object.

Ans. 1.
They that object against a set forme of prayer, do the same thing.

Note.

Ans. 2.
Wee have liberty at other times.

Ans. 3.

The spirit is
not restrained
in a set forme
of prayer.

Quest.

Though a set
forme may be
used in prayer,
yet that alone
is not suffici-
ent.

Ans.

ther times, to pray as freely as hee will in private; and therefore he is not so tied, but though at that time in the congregation he be, yet it is no generall tye; at another time, or immediately after, he may be as free as he will in secer.

Againe, I answer, it is not a bound, or restraint of the spirit, because there is a tye of words; for the largeness of the heart stands not so much in the multitude and variety of expressions, as in the extent of the affection: now then the heart may be very large, for all that; though he be tied in words, yet there is not a tye upon the affection, that may be extended more, in putting up the same petition, when another mans is more straitened: therefore there is no tye, and limit upon that. And this is enough to satisfie that case, that a set forme of prayer must be used.

But now, if you aske, whether that be sufficient? whether a man may thinke, if he have beene present at publike Prayer, (which is a commendable and religious thing to use constantly) I say, whether that be sufficient?

My Beloved, this is a matter of some moment, to consider what wee ought to doe in this case, for we may be deceived in it; and I answer plainly, It is not sufficient: A man that is diligent in publike prayers, that keepes them morning and evening, if hee thinkes now hee hath discharged his duty, he is in a very great errour: and this is the reason, because they are not sufficient. Indeed they ought to be used constantly, for God is worshipped in the; & it is a more divine worship; for when

when God is honoured before many (as a man, when there are many spectators; more honour is done to him) it is a greater honour, which is when men joyne in this worship. Many other reasons might bee produced for it, but that is not the thing, I am now upon, to commend it to you; but I say, it is not sufficient, although it ought to bee done, because there are many particular sinnes, which cannot bee confessed in publike prayer, there are many particular wants, which in publike prayer you cannot unfold, and open, or expresse unto the Lord.

Againe, the end of a set forme of prayer is to be an helpe for the private, (for the publike it is another case) a helpe that one may use that is yet exceeding weake: a child, that cannot goe, may have a prop to helpe it, but wee must not alway be children, we must not alway use that helpe.

Besides, we must consider this, that there is no man that hath any worke of grace in his heart, but he is enabled in some measure to pray, without a set forme of prayer, hee is able to expresse his desires to God in private, one way or other: There was never any man in any extreame want, but he knew how to expresse himselfe, where he had liberty to speake; so it is in this case.

Besides, the spirit of a man hath greater liberty in private; there a man may *pour forth his soule to the Lord*, as *Hanna* saith, *1 Sam. 1*, which in publike hee cannot doe freely: there are many particular mercies, which hee hath cause to bee thankfull to God for.

Simile.

5 Reasons proving that a set forme of prayer is not sufficient.

Reason 1.

Reason 2.

Simile.

Reason 3.

Reason 4.

1 Sam. 1.

Reason 5.

The end why
prayer is used.

Case 5.

About using
the voice, and
about the ge-
sture in secret
prayer.

Ans.

Besides, there is a particular paines that a man is to take with his heart, from day to day, which in the publike common petitions, hee is not able to doe : for, *Beloved*, know this, that the prayer which is required from day to day, is not so much the performance of the duty, the doing of the taske, but the end is to keepe the heart in order ; for if sinfull lusts grow upon it, and distempers, and worldly mindednesse, the end of this duty is to worke them out againe, to renew repentance againe ; and when there is a forgetfulnesse of the covenant, when grace growes weake, when good desires begin to languish, to renew, and recover them, to put suell to them : and this is not done by the performance of the publike onely. And therefore, I say, though you performe it in your families, and meet in the Congregation, you must not thinke that this is enough, for you are bound to a private performance of this duty.

Againe, this is another Case, what a man is to doe in the private performance of this duty, whether hee bee bound alwaies to use his voyce, whether hee bee bound alwaies to such a kinde of gesture.

I answer this briefly, (for there is no great difficulty in these things, and therefore I passe them over) for the gesture in publike, there is more heed to be taken of that, because it is a publike and open worship of God, and therefore in publike the gesture is alway to be reverent. You know how often it is repeated, (in the Old Te-
stament

stament especially) that they bowed downe, and worshipped, and so Christ looked up to heaven, Paul kneeled downe, and the rest with him, and prayed; and many such like expressions you have mentioned in the Scriptures; where you have prayer mentioned in publike, still you shall finde an expression of some reverent gesture; therefore when wee appeare before the Lord in the publike performance of this duty, especiall care must be taken herunto. In the private, the case is different, there variety of gestures may be used, and I do not see but al manner of gestures may be used; there are many examples for walking, and lying, and sitting; onely this is to be taken heed to, that even in private, as farre as may be, the gesture be such, as may both expresse the inward reverence in the heart; for else of the outward man, I see not but there is a liberty in that, And indeed I think this is the best rule in private, that that gesture be used, that doth most quicken, & doth help the duty most. Some gesture may bring a dulnesse, and indisposition, when another may quicken the body, & make it more fit for prayer: sometimes lying is inconvenient, and sometimes more convenient: And therefore, in this case, the best rule is to use that gesture, which quickens most, which helps most the duty. Some gestures may breed a wearinesse in the body, some may breed a dulnesse; some are painefull to the body: all this is a hindrance to the duty, when as the change of it may quicken and helpe it forward.

Now for the voyce, I say, for that, (as for the

G 3

gesture)

Now:

That gesture is to be used in private prayer that doth most quicken.

zalm 4. 24.

Angels how
they speake to
God, and one
another.

James 3. 9.


Why the voice
is used in prai-
se.

gesture) it is not simply required: for *God is a spirit, and he will be worshipped in spirit*. Men that have cares, and bodies, they must have men speake to them: but *God*, that is a Spirit, delights in that which is like himselfe; and therefore all his eye is upon the inward behaviour of the Spirit. Besides the spirit may speake to *God*, when the voice doth not; as, you know, the *Angels* speake to *God*, and they speake one to another. The Schoolmen have great disputes about the speech of *Angels*, but this they agree in, that one *Angel* speakes to another after this manner: When any one hath a conceit in his mind of any thing, with a will that another should understand it, & that *God* should understand it, that is enough for the expression of it; so is it with the spirit of a man, when hee hath such a petition in his heart, in his minde, and there is a desire in his will, that *God* should understand that petition, that is an offering it up to the *Lord*; it is as true a speaking to the *Lord*, as when you deliver it by an outward voice; for the spirit agrees with the *Angels*, so farre as it is a spirit, and as they speake one to another, and to the *Lord*; so doth the spirit of man, though indeed the tongue be to be used, as it is said *I am. 3. 9. Therewith blesse wee God*; and therewith should wee pray among others, and before others, and speake before others: but when there is any cause to use the voice in private, it is this, as farre as it may quicken the heart, (as I said of gesture) and as farre as thereby wee may keepe our thoughts from wandring. If the voice were not used, perhaps,

haps, the thoughts would bee subject to more wandering, and wee should not bee ready to take notice of them, but they would slip before wee are aware; and therefore when the voyce is used it must be to keepe in the thoughts. In some cases, to omit the voice is more convenient, when it may draw any other inconveniency; but that is left to every mans particular case, as hee shall find the use of it to hinder him, or further him. And so much shall serve for this Case.

FINIS.

G 4 THE



THE FOURTH SERMON.

1 THESS. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

Case 6.

About want of
leisure to pray
by reason of
present busi-
nesses to bee
speedily dis-
patched.



Notther Case of conscience in the
businessse of prayer is, what a man
is to doe, when he is in a strait of
time, by reason of some weighty
businessse, that requires a quicke
and sudden dispatch, and gives him not the lea-
sure and liberty, that otherwise hee might have
had?

To this I answer, you shall find, that in Scrip-
tures the prayers of Saints have been sometimes
longer, and sometimes shorter. Our Saviour
CHRIST, you know, sometimes spent a whole
night

night in prayer; Surely he did not take so much time alwayes; and no doubt, wee have liberty sometimes to be longer, sometimes shorter; according as our occasions will permit. But yet this you must remember, that though the businesse bee great, yet that businesse that concerns the salvation of our soules, and the worship of God, is greater: And therefore, before and above all other services, this is still to be preferred: for it is a businesse of greater moment: take heed then you give a just weight to your businesse, and not suffer every small occasion that comes in to thrust out this duty; for heere you keepe not the due proportion, but neglect the greater, and take the lesse.

Besides, doe you not say, when you have great businesse in hand, that a man must have a dining time, and a sleeping time. Scit. Why may wee not say as well, a man must have a praying time; is it not necessary? You know what *the faith*, you know the course that he kept in reading the word, (for that is cleereley meant in that place,) *It was more precious to him than his appointed food:* that is, he had rather omit his usual meales, (for that he meanes by *his appointed food*) than to omit a constant course in performing those holy duties. Therefore, I say, it ought carefully to bee tooke holding, that wee omit it not except it be in a very great strait, which if it should happen, we may be short in it; God ties us not so exactly you see, for howles are set down in the Scriptures, where as we are tyed precisely to such an houre, to such a time,

Matters concerning salvation to be preferred before outward businesse.

We should allow time for prayer, as well as for other businesse.

a time, but God in mercy, and in wisdom, hath left it to our liberty: only observe this is the command, *Pray continually*, doe it exceeding often, at the least, keepe a constant course in it, (as wee heard before) though you should be the shorter in it.

Now let these five Cautions be observed :

Cautions about shortness of prayer in great straits.

Cautions 1. Husband time well a wayes.

1

First, take heed that the straitning come not from your ill husbandry, that is, from your ill husbanding of time; for, if a man were carefull to redeeme time before, (it may be) hee need not be put to such a strait as he is at that time, when he is to performe this duty. Suppose you have a journey to go, that requires much time, and you must be gone early; you may so husband the time before, that you may get time enough for your journey, and for the performance of this duty: and so for other businesse, as I said in the morning, you should labour to sequester your selves to performe this duty of prayer, and therefore take heed you be good stewards of your time, and that you husband it well.

2

And likewise, this is another part of husbanding your time, that you let not that which is very precious, goe for things of small moment; for that is ill husbandry. You should redeem the time, and buy it with the losse of something. You finde time enough to bestow in the weightiest busines of your calling, in things that belong to the good of man, much more should you in this that belongs to the worship of God: And therefore, if it may be, redeeme it with some losse; so

you

you ought to husband it, otherwise you redeeme not time as you ought. This is the first Caution that ought to bee observed, to husband and redeeme the time well.

The second is, if wee be straitned at any time, recompence it at another time: for if it be not a feined excuse and pretence, if you frame not to your selves a straitning, when you have liberty, you will bee carefull to spend more time in it at another season; by that you shall know your sincerity in it, that it is true, and that it is not an excuse, and a putting off.

Moreover, another Caution to be observed is, that you take not too much businesse upon you: if you be straitned with businesse, and therefore cannot be so large in the performance of this duty, as otherwise you would if you did not take so much upon you, your selves are the cause of it. And therefore, he that takes lesse, he that spends more time in the things that belong to salvation, he hath made the better choice; as *Mary* made a better choice than *Martha*, though her employment also were good.

Likewise, as you must not pester your selves with too much businesse, so likewise you must take care, that your mindes be not too much intent upon them; for too much intention of mind upon businesse, causeth distraction in prayer, and causeth us to poss over the duty, as well as too much businesse: when a mans minde shoots it selfe too farre in businesse, when it is too much occupied about it; when it is too much intent;
when

Caution 2.
Recompence
it another
time.

Caution 3.
Take heed of
too much bu-
sinesse.

Caution 4.
Be not too
intent upon
businesse.

Caution 5.
Looks to the
ground of the
strait.

when the soule cleaves too fast upon the busines and cannot loose it selfe to the performance of spirituall duties which require freedom.

The last Caution is, that the strait rise not from diffidence in *God*, and confidence in the use of the meanes; for it falls out oftentimes when wee have businesse of moment in hand, there is a turning, and passing from one creature to another, from the use of one meanes to another, that wee cannot get time in prayer, not so much for want simply, but because we mind the meanes too much, we intend them too much, we doe not trust *God* enough with the businesse; if we did, wee might spend lesse time in them, and more in seeking to him. So much for that Case.

Case 7.
About use of
the meanes.

Another Case of conscience in this businesse of calling upon *God* is, What a man is to doe for the use of the meanes; for when wee are bid to pray, and seeke to *God*, it is an ordinary question amongst us; But may wee not use the meanes too?

Ans.
Reasons why
meanes must
be used.

Reason 1.
Else our de-
sires are not
good.

To this I answer, That prayer is so farre from excluding the meanes, that it includes them; for if the desire bee fervent, when wee desire any thing at *God*'s hands, it will make us diligent in the use of the meanes, to use a convenient diligence, as it will make you earnest in seeking to *God*, and in putting up your request to him. For, if a man shall pray, and bee negligent in the use of the meanes, I will be bold to say it; it is but like the desire of the sluggard, that is, a languishing, and fainting desire. Hee desires, but his

his soule hath nothing; for he desires, but he puts his hand into his bosome: the desires which you expresse, when you pray, they are not fervent, they are not earnest, if you bee remisse in the use of the meanes. Hee that desires grace, and strength against sinfull lusts & temptation, and yet is remisse in the use of the meanes, by which grace should bee increased, and strength gained, to resist those corruptions and temptations, certainly his desires are but vaine and empty desires.

Besides, it is an argument that wee trust not in **G O D**, that wee make no accompt of our prayers, except wee be diligent in the use of the meanes, therefore wee are farre from excluding them; for, if you seeke to **G O D**, and trust to your prayers, and thinke that they will prevaile with him, it will worke this effect, that you will be carefull to use such meanes, as **G O D** hath ordained to bring the thing to passe. Even as, if a man seeke to a Physician, to such a Physician as hee trusts to, into whose hands hee would put his life; when this Physician prescribes such a course, such a dyet, and such a thing to bee taken at such a time, the more hee rests upon the Phhysician, the more carefull hee will bee to observe his prescription and rules: And so, in this case, the more you rest on *God*, the more carefull you wil be to use such meanes as hee hath appointed, when hee hath said, these and these meanes are to bee used. In this case, I say, it is a signe your prayers are more
to

Reason. 2.
Else it is a
signe we trust
not God.

Simile.

Reason. 3.
It is that wee
pray for.

to purpose, when you are diligent in the use of them, when you dare not sleight nor neglect them.

Againe, you must consider this, that when we pray, at any time, wee doe not pray to have any thing done without meanes; but wee pray to have a blessing upon the meanes; and, if we pray for a blessing upon the meanes, our minde is not that they should be omitted: for, you know, *God* doth all things by second causes, he saves us not without our selves, that is, hee useth us as instruments, hee doth every thing by men, by creatures, and by meanes; and the end of our prayers is, not to have them done without meanes, but to have a blessing powred downe upon them. But that which is chiefly to be observed to cleere this point to you is this; That prayer is not the onely meanes, it is but part of the meanes to bring any thing to passe.

Reason. 4.
Prayer not the
onely meanes.

There are two things to effect a businesse, that is, prayer and meanes both: we doe not say prayer is the onely meanes, indeede, then the other were excluded; but since it is but a part, and the other makes up the totall meanes of bringing any thing to passe, it doth not exclude them, but they may be both joyned together, prayer and the use of the meanes. This is enough to shew that we may use meanes, we may pray, and lay our hand on the Plough, wee may seeke to *God*, and be diligent, and as diligent as any body else. But now these three Cautions are to be observed:

Cautions about the use of
the meanes.

The

The first is, That, if wee doe use meanes, wee should use those that are right; for if you trust *God*, and depend upon him, you will not steppe out to any inordinate meanes, nor use lawfull meanes in an inordinate manner: if you doe so, it is an argument that your prayers are of no value in your owne esteeme, for you doe not rest on *God*, which if you did, you would never use any other meanes, than hee hath appointed.

Secondly, though you use the meanes, and pray both, yet you must so use the meanes and prayer both, as that your confidence rests not only thereupon: for it is one thing to use the meanes, & it is another thing to have confidence in them. And therefore we say to you in this case, that you must doe as he that useth the light of the Sun; he so useth the light, as that he hath an eye upon the Sun, from whom that light comes; for he knowes, that if the Sun were set, the light would be gone. Or as he that takes water in a Cisterne, or River, he so takes it, as that hee hath an eye to the Fountaine, hee knowes if the Fountaine were stopped, the River would bee quickly dried up: So you should thinke with your selves, if I use any meanes, any creature, any instrument to bring things to passe, mine eye must bee upon *God*: for all the helpe that we have from the creature, it is but as a beame to the helpe that comes from *God* himselfe. And therefore you must doe in this case, as Physicians are wont to doe, they put many ingredients into a thing, but it is one principall

Caution 1.
Wee must use
right meanes.

Caution 2.
Not trust the
meanes.

Simile.

Simile.

Simile.

fall ingredient, amongst the rest, that he makes account will cure the disease. So doe in this case, make use, both of praier, & of the meanes, yet you must know, that neither prayer nor the meanes are the principall effecter of the thing, but the principall meanes, indeed wherein your confidence is to be, is *God* that doth bring every thing to passe: There is no good in the City, nor no evill, but he doth it; you know hee takes all to himselfe. All the meanes, by which good and ill is conveyed to you, doe not doe the thing, they are but the *vehicula*, they are but the instruments; as the Beere and the Wine wherein the Physicke is taken, but it is the Physicke and the medicine that cures; So all the meanes cannot doe it, it is the helpe and the power of *God*, the efficacy that comes from him, that brings things to passe; therefore that must bee remembred, use the meanes continually, but with dependance upon *God*, with an eye upon him, let not your hearts rest upon them onely; for, if they doe, it is an inordinate use of them.

Simile.

Caution 3.
Not to sicke
to particular
meanes.

Lastly, you must take heed of sticking in any particular meanes; for if you doe, it is a signe that you trust not *God* as you ought to doe. It is a fault commonly, we pitch upon such a particular way, and we thinke that must doe it, or nothing. Now if *God* be trusted too, he hath more waies to the wood than one, he hath more means to bring a thing to passe than one: And therefore wee must leave it to him, who often doth it best by

by another meanes than we dreamed of. As for example, *David* had a promise of the Kingdome; Now, when he had the Kingdome of *Judah*, yet you know, the Kingdome of *Israel* stood out: for *Ishboseth* had the Kingdome, and *Abner* was his chiefe Captaine: besides, in his comming into his Kingdome of *Judah*, we see how *God* wrought the businesse, without his device, by a meanes that he never thought of, in that battell, when *Saul* was killed, and so many of his sonnes, there was so much way made for him, when himselfe used no meanes to bring it to passe. Afterward when the Kingdome of *Israel* was kept from him, and he had onely *Judah*, we see, *God* caused division between *Ishboseth*, and *Abner* his chiefe Captain, upon that comes *Abner*, and offers to *David* the whole Kingdome, but yet he was but a reconciled enemy; and what *Abner* might have done, he knew not. Therefore, *God* by his providence, (though *Joab* sinned in it) caused *Abner* to be taken away by *Joab*: when this was done, yet *Ishboseth* was alive still; then were there two men set by the providence of *God*, (though it were a great sinne in them) to take away his head; and so the Kingdome came wholly to *David*: for, there were but two sonnes, *Mephiboseth*, that was lame of his feet, and *Ishboseth* that was lame in his minde, a weake man, unable to mannage so great and weighty a businesse to purpose: So *God* brought the businesse to passe by a way that *David* thought not of. Therefore, though wee may use meanes, yet, after the use of them, wee

H must

Wee are more
apt to trust
men than
God.

Why God
works not by
our meanes.

Case 8.
About praying
in faith, when
a man wants a
particular pro-
mise, that the
thing which he
asketh shall be
granted.

must depend upon *God*, and leave it to *God*, to take one meanes, or other. We must doe in this case, as we doe when we goe to a man that is very skilfull to doe a worke for us: If wee goe to a Carpenter, and tell him we have such a thing to be done; or, if we goe to those that we call *Aquarioli*, that bring water from place to place, we tell him, this is our desire; but how he will worke, and which way he will bring it to passe, we know not, and yet we trust such an one; for we say, He is an honest man of his word, and if hee have undertaken it, it is enough: Why then will you not trust *God*, that goes so much beyond us, that hath an infinite wisdom, and an infinite power? And therefore let us all so use the meanes, that withall we keepe our dependance upon him, that wee leave it to him, to use this or that meanes as it pleaseth him; for sometimes, it may be, he takes away that which wee are about, sometimes hee leaves us partly destitute, and findes a way of his owne, that we might trust to him, and bee confident of his power and wisdom, in that he is able to doe the thing wee desire. So much likewise shall serve for this Case.

Another Case is, What it is to pray in faith? You know that is required. Now there is a common error in this point: for a man may say, If I pray for the salvation of another, I have no promise, how can I pray in faith? When a man prayes to bee guided in such a businesse, to have such an enterprize to bee brought to passe, to have deliverance from such a trouble, such a sickness,

ness, from such a calamity, that hee lies under, he findes no particular promise, and for ought he knowes, it shall never bee granted: How can hee then be said to pray in faith? For, to pray in faith is to beleve that the thing we pray for shall bee brought to passe and accomplished.

I answer, that to pray in faith, is to goe as farre as the promise goes. Now no particular man hath any particular promise, that he shall have such a deliverance, that he shall have such a particular mercy granted him; and therefore it is not required to beleve that that particular thing should be done.

But you will say, What faith is it then that is required?

I say, it is enough to beleve that GOD is a Father, that hee is ready to heare, and not onely that hee is ready to heare, but that hee is ready to doe that which is best for mee, in such a particular: for both are required, that you beleve him to bee well affected towards you, as a Father, as one that tenders your good; and not onely so, but that hee will doe that, in that particular, that shall bee most for his owne glory, and for your good: and, if you doe so, you pray in faith; though (for the particular) you know not, whether it shall be granted or no. Indeed, if we had a particular promise, as *Elias* had, that it should not raine, &c. in that case, we were bound to beleve in particular, but not having that, wee are not tyed unto it: for the promise is the object of faith, and the habit is

Ans.

Obj.

What faith is required in prayer.

Ans.

Wee are not bound to beleve, that the particular thing shall be granted which we pray for.

If our prayers
be not gran-
ted we mistake
in them.

Case 9.
About a mans
knowledge
that his pray-
er is heard.
Answ.

not to worke beyond the object; for the object is the rule and the limit of the habit: therefore you may pray in faith, when yet you have no ground to beleeve, and to thinke, that that particular thing should bee granted. For example, if a father pray, that his sonne may have grace wrought in his heart, that his soule may bee saved, it may bee the Lord will never doe it; or, if one friend pray for another to the same purpose, though the thing be not done, yet the prayer returns into his bosome, hee is no loser by it, there is a reward belongs to him, for seeking to God in sincerity, it is his duty, that hee should doe so. The like I may say for every other particular case. And this encouragement you may have, that there is never any particular prayer put up, wherein you seeke things that are not granted, but you mistake in it; for, if you beleeve thus farre, as I said to you, bee sure that your prayers are accepted, God will doe that which is best for you, and your prayers shall not be lost. So much also for that.

The last case is, How shall a man know whether his Prayer be heard or not?

For answer to this wee will give you this one rule, (and that is as farre as wee can goe) That those prayers that are made by the assistance of Gods holy Spirit, it is certaine, they are alwayes heard: if you finde that at any time, you need make no question, but that God heares it, and will doe the thing, observing the Cautions that wee have given you heretofore, that is, for the
meanes,

meanes, the manner, the time, and the measure : for it cannot be, but that when the heart is enlarged by G O D : owne Spirit, and the prayer is an expression of holy desires, the L O R D alwayes heares. That place is cleare for it, *Rom. 8. 27.* that *Hee knowes the meaning of the Spirit* : that is, he so knowes it, that hee hearkeneth to it, that hee alwayes accepts of it : and therefore, when you come in such a case, at any time, that your hearts are enlarged in a speciall manner : Marke, I say, when your hearts are enlarged in a speciall manner, and that, with holy desires, certainly, then G O D meanes to grant our requests : hee would not send his Spirit to be an intercessor in your hearts, if hee did not meane to doe it : for, on the contrary, he withholds his spirit, he gives us not that enlargement of heart. Only this distinction must be carefully remembred; you may be sometime very earnest, (the parent may be very earnest for his child, as *David* was for his; and *Moses* for ought we see, was earnest to have gone into the Land of *Canaan*, they were things that they desired) and yet that may be an expression of naturall desires. In which case a man may bee very earnest, and yet he cannot build upon it, to say, my heart is much enlarged in prayer, and therefore I shall be heard.

But observe this, when the heart is enlarged with holy desires, and that in a speciall manner, somewhat more than ordinary, as that, you see, it is the worke of the spirit of G O D, quickning your heart, opening it wide, strengthening and

Rom. 8. 27.

When God will grant our prayers, and when not.

Note.

What kinde of enlargement of heart argues that our prayers are heard.

inlarging it, and sharpening grace and holinesse in you, in those requests you put up to God; in this ease, build upon it, for you may be sure your prayers are heard from that ground wee even now gave you; *Hee knowes the meaning of the spirit.* So much shall serve for those Cases of Conscience in this spirituall duty of calling upon God.

Qualifications
or conditions
required in
that prayer
that shall bee
accepted.

1. *Caution.*
That the per-
son be right.
Iames 5. 16.

1
Because a man
must have
Christ, before
hee have any
thing else.

2
The generall
Covenant is
before the
particular.

Now the last thing we propounded was this: What the qualification is that is required in our prayers: for since we have said so much of prayer, it is a necessary thing that wee know what conditions are required, that it may bee acceptable.

And the first (we will commend to you, which is the ground, and first in order before al the rest) is, that *the person be right.* The prayer of the righteous doth prevaile much, *Iames 5. 16.*

The ground of it is this; a man must first have Christ before he can have any thing else; *He hath given us all things else with Christ:* If wee have all things else, if we have not him, it is nothing: *All his promises* (you know) *are yea and Amen,* but it is in him; so that we must first have him.

And besides, the generall Covenant must goe before the particular: for the ground of all praier is this or that particular promise, but you must first be within the Covenant, you must first have the generall Covenant belonging to you, before you can have the particular branches of it; & therefore a man must be within the covenant, his person must be first righteous, before he be accepted: & therefore let none deceive himselfe in this case, to
thinke

thinke thus with himselfe, he hopes his heart is sincere, and his prayers right, and his ends are good; for though all this were true, yet if his person be not right, God regards it not. You know the blood of a sheepe, and the blood of a swine, they are both alike, it may bee the blood of the swine is better than the other, yet the blood of the swine was not to be offered, because it was the blood of a swine. So in this case, the praier of an unregenerate man may be as well framed, for the petitions, for every thing that is required immediately to a praier; but the heart from whence it comes, the person, from whence it proceeds, that is it that makes the difference: let this therefore be chiefly observed, that the person be right. And therefore you shall finde, *Psal. 4. 3. David makes that the ground, why his prayers should be heard: saith he, Be ye sure that God hath chosen for himselfe the godly man: And when I call upon him I shall be heard.* For that is the ground that hee takes to himselfe, why he shall be heard, because God hath chosen to himselfe the godly man. As if he should say, I am of the number of the godly, and therefore you that are my enemies, and think to prevaile against me, I feare you not, for I pray to a God that will defend me; I am a godly man, and upon that ground I beleve that my prayer is heard. *Beloved,* otherwise though wee pray, and pray hard, yet our sinnes cry lowder than our prayers, they cry downe our prayers, they make a greater noise than they; for the noise that our sinnes make is like the noyse of a Thunder,

Simile.

An unregenerate man may frame a prayer as well as a holy man.

Psal. 4. 3.

Our sinnes out-cry our prayers till our persons be right.

Simile,

2
Remove particular sinnes.

Why the
Saints begin
their Prayers
with humilia-
tion.

1 Tim. 2. 8.

when the noise of our praier is but like the crackling of thornes, which cannot be heard for the noise that sinne makes in the eares of the Lord. Thus it is, in this case, when we come before God in our sins, when a man comes into his presence in his unregency.

But this is not all, for certaine it is, a man that is within the Covenant, may have a particular sinne, (as you heard heretofore) that may intercept his praier, and that may hinder the blessing: so that, that sinne must be removed, before his prayers can be heard. It is true, *The Sonne abides in the house for ever*, but yet the son may commit such an offence, that his father may use him as a servant, hee may deny his requests, and refuse them, when hee comes to seeke any thing at his hands. And therefore, there must be a particular reconciliation, a particular repentance, that sinne must be removed, and done away, that stands in the way. This was the method the Saints alwaies have kept in calling upon God: See it in *Daniel*, and *Ezra*, all of them, for the most part, when they make any compleat prayer, we see, still they begin with humiliation, and confession of sins. And the reason of it is, that their persons might bee cleare and innocent, that those sinnes might be removed; which would stand in their way; and this likewise is a ground of that 1 Tim. 2. 8. saith the Apostle there, *I will, that prayers bee made in all places, that you lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting*: The meaning is this, not onely that a man bee within the Covenant, but that

that he be cleansed from all particular sins, that might cleave to him, and hang upon him. As for example, when thou wouldest be accepted of God, if there doe any particular sin hang on thee, that must bee removed by renewing thy repentance. And besides that, see what the Scripture takes notice of, when a man comes to pray, his heart must be cleansed from pride (for *God resists the proud*) his heart must be brought to an humble disposition; likewise it must be clenfed from wrath, hee must *lift up pure hands without wrath*; which is oft required; *Mat. 5. Leave thine offering, and goe and make peace with thy brother.* So likewise from unthankfulness; our prayers are not accepted, except we be thankfull for mercies received. The like wee may say of every particular sinne; wee must be carefull to cleanse our selves from all sinfull lusts, and corrupt affections, that they have not dominion in our hearts; but that we lift up pure hearts, and innocent hands. And this is the first thing that is required, that the person be right; that is, not onely that hee bee within the Covenant, but likewise that those particular sinnes be removed, that may be an impediment to his prayers.

The second thing required is *Faith*; *Lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting.* You know that in *James*, *Let him that wanteth wisdom aske of God, let him aske in faith, and never nor.* So that though prayer be the key to open Gods treasures, yet faith is the hand that turnes the key, without which it will doe no good.

Now

When we pray
we must clenle
our hearts.

1

From pride.

2

From wrath.

Mat. 5. 23, 24.

3

From un-
thankfulness.

1

2 Requisite or
condition is
faith.
James 1. 5, 6.

Simile.

Why the Lord
requires faith
in prayer.

1

2

3.

JAMES 1. 6.

A twofold
faith required
in our prayers.

Now the Lord requires faith, partly, for his owne sake, he should not otherwise be acknowledged, if you did not trust him, when you come to seeke him, if you did not rest upon him. Besides he should lose his glory; for in this we glorify him when we trust him, and wee dishonour him when we distrust him; when wee come and seeke to him, and doe not rest upon him, we dishonour him.

Besides, in regard of us he requires faith, and will not heare us without it; because, as it is James 1. 6. in the same place, where faith is required, there is good reason why it is required; for faith the Apostle there, *He that beleeves not, or he that wavers, hee is like a wave of the Sea*: that is, sometimes in his prayer hee is very earnest, as a wave that swells high; sometimes againe he will be nothing at all: yea, faith the Apostle, he is not only uneven in the busines of prayer, sometimes earnest and forward, and sometimes giving over again, off and on, but such a man is unstable in all his wayes; for he that trusts in God, will be carefull, not in prayer only, but to keep all his waies right; but he that trusts him not, wavers in every thing: he is (it may be) diligent in praier, he will looketo his wayes for a time, but he rests uot upon God, he rests upon other things, *Hee is like a wave*, he is not constant: and therefore faith is required. Now when I say faith is required, know this, that there is a double faith required:

The one is a faith in the providence of God, the other is a faith in his promise.

First,

First, I say, faith in Gods providence (which is a thing of much moment, and we are apt to forget it.) We see it cleerely, *Psal. 246. Blessed is he that trusts in the God of Jacob, &c. who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, who keepes covenant, and mercy for ever:* you see faith there required in the providence, *He made heaven and earth, the sea,* he is such a God, who is able to bring great things to passe; for he made heaven and earth: and is he not able to doe any thing besides?

Secondly, there must be a faith in his promises, which is expressed in the next words, *He keepeth Covenant for ever.* So likewise to expresse the defect of it: You see when *Martha and Mary* came to *Christ* to raise *Lazarus*, they beleeved he was ready enough to doe it (there was faith in his willingnesse) but they wanted faith in his providence; for *Martha* comes to him, and tells him, *Lord, faith she, Hee hath beene in the grave foure dayes;* as if she had said, surely now it cannot be done, if thou hadst come sooner, it might have been brought to passe: so she beleeved him to be willing, but there wanted faith in the providence.

Again, as here faith in the providence was wanting; so we see, in the Leper, there was faith in the providence (it may be, the other was wanting, but that is not expressed, it is more probable hee had both) *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole:* Here was an evidence of faith in the providence, he acknowledgeth his power, *if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole:* but because *Christ* did fulfill his desire, it is likely hee had faith

I
Faith in Gods
providence.
Psal. 246. 5, 6.

II
Faith in the
promises.

Matth. 7. 7.

Wee doubt of
Gods willing-
nes more than
of his power
to grant our
requests.

How faith may
bee strength-
ned in prayer.
From Gods
Attributes,
which are of
two sorts :
1 Absolute.

1 *Iustice.*

faith in the promise too ; so, Ifay, there must be a faith, first, in the providence ; secondly, there must bee a faith also in the promise of *God* : you have ground enough for that, you have his sure word for it, hee hath said, *Aske and you shall have, seeke and yee shall finde, knocke and it shall bee opened to you ; and whatsoever you aske, if it bee according to his will, it shall be done to you.* So that is the thing wee are chiefly to looke unto, to consider this faith in *Gods* promise ; for men are ready to say, I doubt not but *God* is able, but all the question is, whether he be willing or no. And therefore, if we will have our prayers strong and prevalent, we must bee carefull to strengthen our faith in his promise : for, as that is strong, so our prayers doe more prevaile with *God*. It is a matter of much moment, and therefore we will shew briefly how your faith may be strengthened, and likewise how you may know it.

First, you shall strengthen your faith, if you consider the *nature* of *God*. *Beloved*, this is a great cause why wee beleeeve not the promise of *God*, and his readinesse to helpe us in difficult cases, because wee are ignorant of the *Nature* of *God*, of the *Attributes* of *God* ; or at least, we doe not consider them. For example, (that I may open it to you a little, and shew you the way of making use of the *Attributes* of *God*, in calling upon him, & strengthening our faith from them) consider, first, the *Iustice* of *God*, (I will give you examples, how the Saints have still strengthened their faith frō *Gods* *Attributes*) *David* useth this

Argu-

Argument, *Lord, thou art Iust, I am Innocent*: when he telleth God of his Iustice, and withall expresseth his owne Innocencie, it is a strong Argument. *David*, you see, useth it oft, (I need not to name particulars) *Lord, reward me according to mine Innocencie, &c. thou knowest I am righteous*, and mine enemies have done me thus and thus much wrong, and *thou art iust*: God cannot deny this; for it is a strong Argument, that is taken from such an Attribute.

So againe, the goodnesse of God; *Lord, thou art full of mercie*; on the other side, *I am full of miserie*: and when these are put together, it is a great meanes to strengthen our faith. And therefore, wee see, *David* often expresseth his owne calamity, his disease, how hee was oppressed by enemies, and slandered, &c. and Gods mercie, (that is the ground of it) *God is full of compassion*: as if he should say, thou art full of goodnesse, and I am in calamity, and miserie, at this time: and that was an Argument whereby he strengthened his faith.

So againe, another Attribute of God is, his glory: when we make the Argument thus, *Lord, thou hast an eye to thy glory*, and I aime at thy glory: In such a request, it is a strong prevailing Argument with him. You know, *Moses* prevailed with him, when he sought the saving of the whole people of *Israel*, *Lord*, saith he, *thy name will be polluted, what will the Heathen say?* And since I aime at thy glory in it, deny me not. And likewise *Ezekiel*; and *David*, they use the same Argument

2. Mercy.

3. Glory.

gument to God, *shall the dust praise thee?* shall any glory be given to thee in the grave? shall wee be able to doe any thing for thy honour, when wee are dead? So that the Arguments that are taken from Gods glory, and our aime at his glory, is another meanes to strengthen our faith.

4 Power.

Moreover, the power of GOD, that is another Attribute, whereby wee may conceive the same Argument, (as I said before,) when wee goe to God, and expresse our weakenesse, and his power, Lord, we are weake, we are able to doe nothing; Lord, thou art Almighty, thou mad'st heaven and earth, it is a strong argument to prevaile with him. So, we see, *Asa* prevailed with God, 2 Chr. 14. *Oh Lord, saith he, it is all one with thee to helpe with many, or few, and we rest upon thee: as if he should say; We are exceeding few, we are exceeding weake, we are able to doe nothing, but thou art able to do it, with a few, as well as with a great multitude; there he puts them together. And the like we have of Iehosaphat, Lord, we have no strength to stand before our enemies, but our eyes are to thee: As if he should say, thou hast strength and power enough, thou art able to doe it, though we are unable. This is another Argument taken from the power of God.*

2 Chron. 14. 11.

2 Chron. 20. 12.

5 Vnchange-
ablenesse.

Again, the unchangeablenesse of God. When one comes to the Lord, and shall say to him, Lord, thou hast done thus and thus in former times for thy servants, Lord, thou hast done thus and thus for me, in another case, and thou art unchangeable, thou art the same God: this is a great meanes

meanes to strengthen our faith. As you know, it is in your Law-suits, when you have a president, it addes strength to the cause, so when wee have presidents for this, it will adde strength to us, and that strength is taken from Gods unchangeablenesse; if we put them together, *Lord*, thou art unchangeable, *Lord*, thou hast done it to other men in the like case; thou hast done it to me also in the like case: It is a strong Argument, and an Argument that *David* useth; you see how hee is stayed up by it, *Psal. 22. 4. Lord, our fathers trusted in thee, and were delivered, they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.* As if he should say, *Lord*, thou art unchangeable, thou heardest them in the same case when they trusted in thee; now, it is my case, and therefore I beseech thee to helpe mee in my distresse.

Simile.

Psal. 22. 4.

Againe, the faithfulness of God, the fidelity of God; that is another of his Attributes: and when wee make our Argument thus, *Lord*, thou art faithfull, and I trust in thee; it is a strong Argument, for you know, it is an Argument that prevayles much with men; a man is ready to say, hee trusts me, I must not deceive him: Much more the LORD keepes Covenant, and mercy for ever. When wee come, and use this to him, *Lord*, thou art faithfull, thou hast said, thou wilt keepe Covenant and mercy for ever, thou canst nor doe otherwise, it is thy nature, thou canst not deny thy selfe, and I rest on thee, I depend on thee; in such a case, it cannot bee the *Lord* should faile us: If a man will not faile one that trusts in him, certainly

6 Faithfulness.

a Relative.

certainly the *Lord* will not, and that is an Argument that is used oft, thou never failest them that trust thee.

Then, besides the absolute Attributes of *God*, consider his relative Attributes; he is a *Father*, and a *Master*: It is a strong Argument that is taken from these. If we goe to the *Lord*, and say, *Lord*, thou art a *Father*, thou art a *Master*, thou art an husband; Whither should the children goe, but to their father? Whither should the wife goe, but to her Husband? Whither should the servants goe, but to their Master, to their *Lord*? *Lord*, thou hast commanded us to provide for our owne, and *He is worse than an Infidell that provides not for his owne*: *Lord*, we belong to thee, wee are thine. We see, *David* useth this Argument, that *God* had made him. You have it oft in the *Psalmes*, that *God* had made him, not onely his Creature, but had made him againe, hee was his servant; *I am thy servant*: hee useth oft this Relative, that *God* was his *God*, and that he was *Gods servant*, one that did belong to him, and that did depend upon him. And surely (my Beloved) dependance, and seeking to *God*, is a great meanes to winne him to us. When wee see another depend upon us, and lookes after no body else, that is an effectuall motive with men: the same is as prevalent with *God*; and therefore may strengthen our faith. Now, when I say these Arguments prevaile with *God*, the meaning is indeed, that they prevaile with us, they strengthen our faith, they enable us to beleewe, that *God* is ready to helpe

Arguments in
prayer strengthen
our faith.

helpe us, and when wee beleeeve it, and trust upon him, then indeed God is ready to second it; because then wee are prepared, wee can then put up our desires in the prayer of faith; otherwise they are put up with doubting, and that makes them unacceptable to God, and uneffectuall. And, now as I have shewed you the way, so likewise in a word, we will shew you when we doe pray in faith (for that is a thing that is very usefull) you shall know it by this (for I adde that because I see the Scriptures requires it, as such a maine condition, without which a man cannot be accepted, *Bee it done to thee according to thy faith*; it is every where inculcated) you shall know it, I say, by the quietnesse of your mind, and your security. When a man calls upon God, and his mind is quiet in it, it is a signe that he beleeeves, and trusts in him, it is a prayer of faith. *Hannah*, you know, in that case, *looked no more sad*, because she trusted in God, she beleeeved the thing should be done and rested therein: and therefore if you finde solicitude and perplexity in your mind, it is a signe that your praiers want so much faith; for if you did rest upon God, you would be quiet, and secure in him.

Secondly, if you doe beleeeve, you will continue in prayer. You know, it was an argument of the faith of the woman of *Canaan*, that she continued, that she would take no deniall; though the Lord did not grant her request, but put her off, yet she held out: & what was the reason of it? because she beleeeved that he was the son of *David*, that he

I

was

How wee may know that we pray in faith.

1
By the quietnesse of the mind after.

2
By continuance in praier.

*Simile.**Exy 28.*

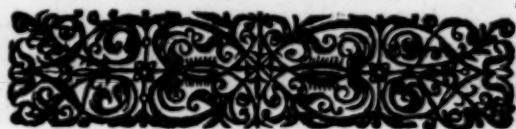
3
Diligence in
the use of the
meanes,

was mercifull, and that hee would heare in the end. So that continuance in prayer is an argument we doe beleeve the *Lord*. As a man that beleeves, such a man is within the house whom he desires to speake with, is content to wait long for him: Or he, that hath a suit, and knowes that he shall have an end of it at such a time, he will never give over till it bee effected: So it is in this case, if we beleeve, we will be content to wait, *He that beleeves will not make haste*, because hee trusts in *G O D*, and depends upon him.

Lastly, a diligent use of those meanes that *God* hath prescribed, and no other, is a great argument that our prayer is with faith. And thus we have shewed you the two things that are required in prayer; first, that the person must be righteous, and within the Covenant; secondly, that there must bee a beleeving in *God*: as also how this faith is wrought, both in his providence, and in his promises; and likewise how we shall know, whether our prayers be the prayers of faith,
or no.

FINIS.

THE



THE FIFTH SERMON.

1 THES. 5. 17.

Pray continually.



HE next condition required in prayer is *feruency*; you know the place, *The prayer of the righteous availeth much, if it bee fervent.* The Lord requires this qualification in prayer, because it puts the heart into a holy and spirituall disposition: for it is not simply the making of the request, that God looks for at our hands, but such a working upon our hearts by praier, such a bringing of the to a good frame of grace, by that duty, that thereby we are more

I 2

fitted

3. Condition
required in
prayer is fer-
uency.
1am 5. 16.

What God re-
quires in pray-
er.

Why God re-
quires ferven-
cy.

Simile.

fitted to receive the mercy, that before we were not. When a man is fervent in prayer, it sets all the wheeles of his soul the right way, it puts the heart into a holy and spirituall disposition and temper, so that the *Lord* sees it now fit to bestow mercy upon such a man, that before was unfit, by reason of his untowardnesse, and stubbornesse of heart, by reason of that uncleane and unholy disposition, that he saw in him. And therefore hee wil have prayer fervent, not so much because the very fervency of prayer it selfe is respected, but because by vertue of that fervency the heart is made better : when a man comes to *God* with a request, like the request of the patient to the Physician, it may be the Physician denies long, when the Patient asks things that are pleasant and agreeable to him, not because he is unwilling to give the, but because his body must be brought into another temper, he must take a vomit, or a purge, which perhaps is grievous to the Patient, but this must be done before he be fit to receive such cordials : so the *Lord* deales with his servants, though he be willing to bestow such mercies on them, yet, because they are not fitted, he requires continuance in prayer, and fervency in it. Therefore, we say, in prayer all the graces of *Gods* Spirit are set on work, and the more fervent the prayer is, the more they are intended, the more they are acted, the more they are increased; and therefore the *Lord* is moved by this fervency, to bestow a mercy on us, that otherwise hee would not doe.

But

But now all the question is, what this fervency is?

You shall find it usually expressed in the Scriptures by such metaphors as these, *Crying to the Lord, wrestling with the Lord, striving with him, and giving him no rest*: wherein these two things are to be marked:

First, a man is said then to be fervent, when he puts all his strength to prayer, when he is very earnest, and importunate with the *Lord*, when hee strives and contends with him, though hee finde many difficulties, and impediments, yet he breakes through all; this is to be fervent in prayer, to be importunate with the *Lord*. For example, when a man comes to pray, hee findes many discouragements, and himselfe (perhaps) guilty of many sinnes, yea, he findes little holinesse, he hath but feeble faith to his own sense, and much deadnesse of spirit, yet he continues instant notwithstanding; nay, further hee doth not onely finde these impediments in himselfe, but hee finds the *Lord* exceeding backward to the thing, either giving no answer, turning the deafe eare to him, or (it may be) giving a contrary answer, as to the woman of *Canaan*. But to give you a particular example; when a man comes to pray for health, it may be his sicknes increaseth upō him more; when he prayes to overcome such a lust or temptation, it may be, it is doubled upon him; when hee prayes for such a deliverance, it may be, the oppression growes more and more; as it was with the *Israelites*, when they sought for deliverance

Quest.

Ans.

When a man is said to be fervent.

I

When we put to all our strength notwithstanding difficulties.

Mat. 15.

2
When we are
constant.

liverance out of *Egypt*, the oppression grew greater : now to hold out notwithstanding this, and to continue in prayer, and to outwastle *God* in it, though he seeme backward to the request; this is to be fervent in prayer.

Secondly, fervency is not onely loud praying, but continuall knocking, when a man is not only importunate with the *Lord*, but hee continues long, hee will not give over, till he have got the blessing. You know, *Jacobs* fervency was seene in that, that he continued all night, *He wrestled with the Lord*. What was the reason that he wrestled? *Hee would not let him goe, till hee had got the blessing*, till he had obtained the thing he sought for. So I say, this earnestnesse, & continuance in prayer, the breaking thorow all difficulties, this is to wrestle with the *Lord*: for all wrestling and striving (you know) supposeth some opposition on the other part. Indeed, if there were no opposition, it were a small thing; but, I say, when the *Lord* is most backward, when the thing is most improbable, when there is much difficulty, so that you know not how it should be brought to passe, yet if you continue striving, and give the *Lord* no rest, as though you would never give over; this is fervency in prayer, and this is a condition that the *Lord* requires. But here two Cautions must be remembered, that we mistake not this fervency:

Cautions a-
bout fervency.

1.
That it bee a
fruit of faith.
Simile.

First (remember) fervency, if it be right, it must be a fruit of faith: for there is a fervency that comes not from faith, but from a naturall sense of want, when a man is indeed as a swine that

that is pinched, which, you know, will cry exceeding loud, not because it looks for help, but because it is pinched: so any other creature, or a mā naturally will use importunity, when he wants any thing, and will be earnest in his requests; such fervency the Lord regards not, because there is no more but a meere expression of naturall desires, there is no holinesse in it, there is no fire of the Spirit; but when this is added to it, that there is not onely a sense of the thing wee want, but also a hope of mercy, a ground to beleieve that I shall have the thing granted, and out of this ground I am earnest and importunate; now earnestnesse is a fruit of faith. When Iesus Christ lived upon earth, when men came and cryed earnestly unto him, and were exceeding importunate; some to bee healed of their diseases, some to have devils cast out, &c. we see his answer was still to them, Be it to thee (how?) not according to their importunity and fervency, but according to their faith: as if hee should say, I heed not, I regard not all this clamour and earnestnesse, if they bee onely expressions of such wants, if they be onely in the sense of such need, and no more; but if they proceed from faith, and that faith set you on worke to call upon mee, *Be it unto thee according to that.* For indeed, these two things make up fervency in prayer; *sense of need, and hope of mercy*; when a man hath faith and hope to increase his fervency, and it ariseth from that ground, as well as out of the other (not that I exclude the other, for it is a very great helpe, and

When fervency is a fruit of faith.

Whence fervency springs.

Simile.

that which puts stickes on the fire (as it were) to make our fervency the more) I say, from sense of our need, when we consider seriously what want wee have, and then adde this hope, and faith; when these two shall set you on worke, this fervency is a fruit of faith. And this is one caution that must be remembred.

2. Caution.
That it bee
mingled with
sincerity.

*Note.**Rom. 12. 11.*

Another Caution is this, that your fervency be joyned with sincerity; for a man may be fervent to obtaine such and such blessings, as hee may beg at Gods hand very earnestly, he may aske credit, he may aske to have guidance in such a businesse, he may aske wisdom to bring such an enterprize to passe, hee may aske health, and continuance of life, but to what end? if it be that he may bestow it upon his lusts, if it be that hee may live more deliciously, that he may be some body more in the world, that hee may have outward conveniencies, such as his flesh desires, if this bee all, here this fervency is not regarded; not that these things are excluded, for the Lord gives us leave to seeke our owne comforts, and you may be earnest, and importunate, even for the comfort it selfe; but yet all these if they be not capable of a further use, if that be not intended, but the abuse of them, and an intent to use them another way, the Lord heeds it not, it is no true fervency. And therefore in *Rom. 12. 11.* it is the exhortation of the Apostle, *Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*; when we many times (it may bee) are fervent in spirit, serving our selves, we are fervent to aske such and such requests, out
of

The Saints daily Exercise.

121

of ends of our owne, as when a man desires able gifts, high gifts, to get glory, and to get wealth to himselfe, and not to serve his Master, this is to aske the talent, not for his masters use, but for his owne; doe you thinke the *Lord* will heare such prayers? can you expect it at his hands? You shall see the contrary practice in the Saints; when they were earnest with the *Lord* for any thing, still they expresse that to him, and say, *L o r d*, we desire not this for our selves, but for thy glory, that we may use it for some good purpose, &c. *David*, when hee was earnest for life, when he was in sicknesse, and doubted of his recovery, what argument doth he use? *Lord*, saith hee, *Shalt thou have glory in the grave?* As if hee should say, if thou give me life, I will give it thee againe, I will improve it, and husband it to thy advantage, and not to mine owne. And so *Hannah*, when she was earnest for a sonne, she makes this promise to the *Lord*, that he shall be for him and his advantage, she would dedicate him to his use, and consecrate him to his service. So *Jacob*, when hee was earnest with the *Lord* to give him meat, drinke, and cloathes, &c. *L o r d*, saith he, *If thou doe, I will give the tenth part to thee againe.* I say, when the heart is thus disposed in our fervency, in our importunity, when wee aske any thing at the *Lords* hands, that our conscience tels us within, that if wee had it, wee would bestow it upon the *L o r d*, wee would not abuse it, wee would not spend it on our lusts, it should not be to serve our selves, but to serve the *L o r d* with-
all,

What Argument the Saints have used in their prayers.

4. Condition
required in
prayer is hu-
mility.
James 4.
2 Chron. 7. 14.

Isay. 66. 2.

Reason why
humility is re-
quired in prai-
er.

I
God exalts
such,

Gen. 31.

all, then our fervency is rightly ordered.

The next condition required, is *humility*; as *James 4. The Lord gives grace to the humble*: And *2 Chron. 7. 14. If my people humble themselves, and call upon my name, then will I heare in heaven, and grant their requests*. And throughout the Scripture, you see, that this is a condition that the Lord puts in every where; *Hee hath respect to the low estate, Isay. 66. 2. saith the Lord, All these things have my hands made*, looking upon all the creatures, the whole frame of them, they are all good, and I have respect unto them; but, saith he, I regard not all these in comparifon of an humble heart, *To him will I looke that is of an humble and contrite spirit*: when the Lord looks upon our prayers, if they come not from a broken heart, they want that condition that he looks for: *for he gives grace to the humble*; that is, to such a man as is little in his owne eyes, and therefore fit to be exalted, fit to receive a mercy at Gods hands.

You know, it is a rule that the Lord keeps; for such as are humble and low, such he exalts; and those that exalt themselves he puls downe. Now when a man is little in his owne eyes, that parity, that sense of his owne unworthinesse is a prevailing argument with him; and therefore *Gen. 32. Iacob useth that Argument*, when hee comes to put up his petition, to bee delivered from *Esau: Lord, I am lesse than all thy mercies*: that is, take any one of thy mercies, the least, and put in one end of the balance, & put me in the other and I am lesse than it, and lighter than it, take all the

the worth that is in me, it is not heavy enough for the least mercy. Now, when hee was thus humbled, and little, and vile in his owne eyes, the Lord bestowed that mercy on him, hee was now fit to receive it. So *David*, when the Lord sends him word by *Nathan*, that he would build him a house for ever (you see how hee expressed himselfe) *Hee went into the house of the Lord, and sate before him, and said, Lord, what am I, and what is my fathers house?* As if hee should say, I was taken out of the dust, I was one of the meaneſt men of *Israel*, and a man of no account, of no worth, and yet thou haſt had reſpect unto me thus farre, not onely to make me King over thy people; but to build my Kingdome, and my house, to make me a constant house for ever. I ſay, this ſenſe of our owne unworthineſſe, makes us more fit to receive the mercy, to bee exalted by receiving ſuch a requeſt, as wee put up to the Lord; and therefore hee regards the prayer of the humble.

2 Sam. 7. 18.

Moreover, God gives grace to the humble, that is, he ſhewes favour to them, when they come and aſke any thing at his hands, becauſe an humble man will be ready to doe whatſoever hee will, it is an expreſſion of *David*, in *Acts 13. 22.* *Hee will doe whatſoever I will:* that may bee ſaid of every humble man, he is exceeding pliable to the Lords will, hee is ready to doe whatſoever hee knowes to bee his pleaſure, hee reſiſts him in nothing. Now, when a man will doe whatſoever God will, the Lord will be ready to doe whatſoever

2.
God gives
grace to ſuch,

Acts 13. 22.

ver

Mat. 23. 18.

ver he will; he will be ready to say to him, as he did to the *Canaanite*, *Oh woman bee it to thee as thou wilt*. When a man on the other side, resists the **L O R D** (as every proud man doth, saith the text) the *Lord* resists him, the *Lord* *resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble*. A resisting spirit causeth the *Lord* to resist our prayers; and therefore it is, that the *Lord* is ready to the humble man, because he yeelds to the *Lord* in all things; and when a man yeelds to the *Lord* (take that for a rule) in obeying *Gods* Commandements, *God* will yeeld to us in granting our petitions.

Note.

3

It is an acceptable sacrifice.

Psal. 51. 16, 17.

Besides, when the heart is humbled, and broken, and contrite, it is an acceptable sacrifice to the *Lord*, which winnes it at his hands: he smells a sweet savour from such a sacrifice above all other; yea, it is that which sets a high price upon every sacrifice that wee offer; the best prayers, the best workes, that proceed not from an humble heart, he regards them not: as *Psal. 51. Lord*, saith *David*, *if I offer sacrifice, thou wilt not regard it, but the sacrifice of a contrite, and humble spirit*, those thou regardest, and those sacrifices that proceed from it. When wee come to make a petition to the *Lord* (it was the manner in the old law not to come empty-handed) a proud person comes empty-handed; but an humble person comes with a sacrifice, and the best sacrifice; because he sacrificeth himselfe, and his owne will, that is, he empties himselfe of himselfe, he opens a doore to the *Lord* to come, and dwell in him, when a proud man barres him out; such a sacrifice

fice the Lord is well pleased with, and such a sacrifice speakes for one, it makes a way for his requests, and therefore the Lord hearkens to it.

Lastly, the Lord is ready to heare those that are humble, because whatsoever they receive, they take it as of grace, and not as debt: whereas a proud man, a man that hath a good conceit of himselfe, a man that is lift up in his owne opinion, thinkes it to be due, he thinkes there is some correspondence between his workes, and the wages. You know what is said of the Pharisee, that the Publican went away justified rather than he. Why so? Because the Publican thought himselfe worthy of nothing. And therefore Ezek. 36. 31. when the Lord promiseth those great mercies to his people, he requires this condition of them, that they should acknowledge themselves worthy to be destroyed. When a man hath a sense of his owne unworthinesse, and so comes to the Lord, and asks it as of meere grace and mercy, that is a great motive to prevaile with him: for he is very carefull of that. You know in Deut. 8. 11. how wary the Lord was in giving this rule to them; Take heed when thou comest into that good Land, thinke not to say with thy selfe, the Lord hath done this, for my owne righteousness. No, saith he, I have not done it for that, but for my Covenant which I made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: that is, for my own name sake, for my mercies sake, for the covenant that I confirmed with them, that is, the covenant in Iesus Christ, therefore I have done it, and not for your own righteousness. So then you see, that
this

4
They receive
all as of free
grace.

Luke 18.

Ezek. 36. 31.

Deut. 8. 11.

5. Condition
required in
prayer is, to
sanctifie the
Lord in our
hearts.

this is a condition the *Lord* will have observed in our calling upon him, that our hearts be humbled, that a man be little, and vile in his own eyes, that he come with a broken, and contrite heart, pliable to him in all things, ready to obey him; when the heart is so disposed, he *gives grace*, that is, he shewes favour, he is ready to grant our requests.

The next condition required in prayer, is, that wee *sanctifie the Lord in our hearts*. You know, when *Nadab* and *Abihu* drew neere unto him with a common fire (when they should have brought such fire as came from heaven, holy fire) the *Lord* destroyed them: and he gives this reason, *For I will be sanctified in those that draw neere to me*. When wee come to call upon the *Lord*, wee know, then wee come neere to him, and in such drawing neere, wee must sanctifie him in our hearts, that is, we must conceive him to be, as he is, most holy. Now if the *Lord* be most holy, if he that is unclean, and impure, and unholy, shall come neere him, he sanctifies not the *Lord God*, (that is) he comes not to him as to a most holy *God*, but he looks upon him, as if he were a common person. And therefore whensoever they came to offer a sacrifice, in the old Law, they were first purified; if any man were unclean, and should offer a sacrifice, hee was to be cut off from his people. Therefore to sanctifie the *Lord* in our hearts, is to come with holy hearts, as in *1 Tim. 2. 8*. It is the charge that the Apostle gives there, *Lift up pure hands without wrath or doubting:*
lift

1 Tim. 2. 8.

lift up your hearts, and innocent hands, without wrath or doubting.

But you will say, what is this holinesse?

Beloved, it is nothing but a *sequestering, or separating any thing from a common use, and appropriating it to God alone*; that is holinesse. You know, what soever was holy to the *Lord*, in the Temple, or otherwise, whether it were holy vessels, or holy men, as the Priests, it was separated from all other uses, and made peculiar to him, and to his service. Now the heart of a man is holy then, when it is withdrawne from all things else, and peculiar to the *Lord* alone. As a chaste wife is to her husband, whose affections are bestowed upon him, and no other person else; so when the heart is to the *Lord* alone, when all the affections are intent upon him, and bestowed upon him, and upon none else, this is to have the heart holy to him. So that now he that will have an eye upon credit, upon vaine-glory, upon wealth, upon his lusts, upon any thing besides the *Lord*, whereto the heart is wedded, so that he bestowes any part of that conjugal affection upon it, which should be wholly the *Lords*, this man is an unholy man, his heart is not holy: for it is not sequestred from other things, and consecrated to him alone: for that only is to be holy.

And as the heart must bee holy, so must the prayer be holy. When a man prayes to the *Lord* with respect unto him, and hath an eye upon him, and nothing else comes in to take away part of this prayer; if by-respect, and worldly, and carnall

Quest.

Ans.
Holines what.

1

The heart
must be holy.
Simile.

An unholy
man who,

2

The prayer
must be holy.

carnall thoughts come in, and set you on work to pray, now these have a portion & interest in your prayers, they make your prayers profane and common, they are not peculiar to the *Lord*, they are unholy. So that is the holiness then in seeking the *Lord*, when we are knit, and wedded to him, when one takes this resolution to himselfe, I am the *Lords* servant, and him will I serve, I am not the servant of man, nor of any creature, I am married to the *Lord*, and his will I be alone, I will withdraw my heart from all things else. So likewise when a man prayes, so that his soule is intent upon the *Lord*, and upon nothing besides, when the whole streame of his affections are carried to him, this is to seeke to him in holiness, this is to sanctifie the *Lord* in our hearts.

Heb. 10. 2.

3

Particular sins
must be repen-
ted of.

And lastly, if there be any conscience of sinne (that phrase I finde used in *Heb. 10.*) that is, if there be any evill conscience, if a man be conscious to himselfe of any sin that is unrepented of, such a man cannot pray, that makes him unholy: if there be any sinfull lust yet living in him, that is unmortified in him, which is not washed away, such a man is unholy: yea, my Beloved, the Saints themselves, when they sinne against *God*, as you heard heretofore, they are suspended from the Covenant, though they be within the Covenant, yet they are suspended from receiving the benefit by it, which otherwise they might have: till that sinne be washed away they are not holy. A Priest, or one that was holy, if he touched any uncleanse thing, hee remained unholy

holy, till he was washed, though otherwise hee were holy habitually, wholly dedicated to *Gods* service; so it may be with those, that are within the Covenant, though thou bee a holy man, yet, if thou touch pitch, that is, if thy heart be polluted with any sinne, of one kinde or other, as long as that remaines, thou art unholy. If thou come now, and seeke to the *Lord*, you know what the judgement was in the old law, such an one was to bee cut off from his people. And therefore, you shall finde, this was the constant practice of the Saints, when they sought the *Lord*, for any speciall mercy, they began with taking paines with their owne hearts, with humbling themselves for their owne sinnes, and the sinnes of the people: as we know, *Daniel*, and *Ezra*, and *David* did in their prayers; but I will not stand to enlarge my selfe therein, for it is well enough known to such as are conversant in the Scriptures: only let me exhort every man, when hee commeth with any request and petition to the *Lord*, let him first examine his heart and life diligently, looke backe to all his former wayes, consider and go through all the particulars; see if there bee any thing amisse, if there be any tincture of uncleannesse yet lying upon him, which is not yet washed away, if there be any pollution, any defilement of flesh, or spirit; and let him know, that it is but labour lost, it is a provoking of the *Lord*, to come with unpreparednesse to draw neere to him, except he be cleansed.

But you will say, How shall we be cleansed?

The practice of
holy men in
their prayers.

Quest.

Ans.
2 Meanes of
cleansing a
mans selfe.

I

2

1 Cor. 9.

Consciousnesse
of sin a great
hinderance in
our prayers.

Simile.

Heb. 10. 22.

I answer, you are cleansed by renewing your repentance, and sprinkling the blood of Christ: when a man humbles himselfe for his sinne, and entreth into a covenant with God, not to returne unto it, when he makes his heart perfect, and sincere with the LORD in that particular.

And secondly, when he shall withall beleewe, that it is forgiven through Christ, when hee is sprinkled with his blood to wash it away: though thy sinne be great, yet this will make thee pure, now thou art washed; as it is in 1 Corin. 6. 9. *Now you are washed, now you are sanctified, now you are justified:* therefore let no man bee discouraged in this case: for, I confesse, there is nothing that gives such a check to our prayers, that gives so many stabs to them (as it were) that hinders us in that duty, as the consciousness of sinne, when a man remembers such and such a sinne he hath committed, which doth much discourage him, if by the blood of Iesus Christ they be not washed away. Though a mans face be very foule, yet you know, a basin of cleere water will wash it cleane, and all the filth is gone; now the blood of Christ is more effectually to rinse thy conscience, and to purge it from dead workes, to take away, both the guilt, and likewise the filth and staine of sin, than water is to cleanse thy face; and therefore, if thou hast any sinne, labour to be washed from it, that so thou maist come to the Lord, having thy heart sprinkled from an evill conscience, and thy body washed in pure water, as it is Heb. 10. 22. *Let us draw neere,* saith the Apostle,

postle, in assurance of faith; (but how?) having our hearts sprinkled from an evill conscience: as if hee should say, otherwise your drawing neere will be to no purpose, you shall but provoke the Lord in drawing neere, except you be thus sprinkled, and thus washed, and thus purified.

I, but you will say to mee, if this be required, who shall be heard in his prayers? For who can say his heart is pure, and his hands are innocent? and if this be required, that we must lift up holy and pure hearts, or else we shall not be accepted; what comfort shall wee have in calling upon the Lord, at any time?

To this I answer, that to have a pure heart is not to be free from sin, and from daily failings, (for so indeed none should have a pure heart) but purenesse of heart, holinesse of heart is, to have our hearts sprinkled from an evill conscience, and to have our bodies washed with pure water; (that is) to be purified before the Lord is nothing else, but to have such an habituall disposition, which makes a man ready to wash himselfe stil, though hee bee still spotted with sinne. So that this is the disposition of a holy man; if a man that drawes neere to the Lord with a pure heart, though hee bee still spotted, and polluted, and defiled, yet hee hath an habituall disposition, hee hath a principle within, hee hath a new nature within, that is still working out that impurity, and washing it away; though still he be opposed, and assaulted, and tempted, and sometimes foiled, yet still he resists it, and fights against it;

Obj^{ct}.

Ans^{wer}.
What it is to have a pure heart.

A holy heart
never makes
peace with sin.

Purity what.

Simple.

as the *Israelites* had a charge never to make peace with *Amalek*: such a disposition is in a holy man, hee never makes peace with any sinne; though hee be led captive sometimes by it, yet he yeelds not to that captivity. This is to have a pure heart, though his heart be defiled sometimes as a vessel will be foule, yet hee washeth, and rinseth his heart, he never suffers it to continue muddy, and uncleane, and in a filthy disposition, but hee hath a fountaine, a spring of grace within, that will worke out all impurity, as a spring workes out mudde; he that thus purifies himselfe still, though the fountaine be muddy, though there bee many injections, many temptations, many lusts and sinnes; yet if hee be purified himselfe, that hee will suffer no sinne to mingle with his heart (as it were) to rest there, and to abide, and dwell there, to lye and continue there, such a man hath a pure heart. We say, that is pure, that is full of it selfe, and will have no *heterogenea*, no other thing mingled with it, such a thing is pure as pure oyle is nothing else but oyle. Now hee that hath a pure heart, is not he that hath simply nothing else, that hath no sinne mingled, that hath no drosse mingled with his wine, but hee that suffers it not to rest there, for as oyle and water, when you jumble them together (as you know) when they are shaken together, they mingle, yet the oyle workes out, and purifies it selfe, it will not suffer it selfe to abide with the water: so a man that is regenerate, a man that is borne of God, hath a seed remaining in him, though he do
sin,

sin, yet, saith the Apostle, *he cannot sinne*, that is, he doth not agree, he doth not mingle with that sin, it hath no rest in his heart, but he workes it out; in a passion when hee is shaken (as it were) when he is transported, when he is not himselfe, there may bee a mixture, and the fountaine, and the spring may be made muddy, yet let him come to himselfe, still hee workes it out: and this it is to have a pure heart. So that a man, a man thus affected, may comewith boldnesse to the throne of grace, and not be discouraged; what though thy sinnes be many, and very great, and often repeated; yet if thou find in thyselfe such a disposition of purenesse and holinesse, still to cleanse thy self, though thou be still polluted and defiled, I can assure thee, thy heart is pure, thou maist go with confidence to the Throne of grace.

But now you will say this to me (for that may be objected) why? but may not any carnall man say as much, he sins against God, and comes and askes mercy, he comes and cries for forgivenessse and saith he will sinne no more, and yet he sinnes again the next day, and *addes drunkennesse to thirst*, that is, his sinne and his repentance they run in a circle, as drunkennesse and thirst? how shall we then distinguish between these two? that purifying disposition in the Saints, and those vanishing purposes that carnall men may have, who notwithstanding never had experience of the worke of grace, of that purity of heart that wee speake of?

To this I answer briefly, you shall know the

X

Object.

Ans.

Difference between the godly and others in falling into sinne.

Sinne in a carnal man groweth stronger, in a godly man weaker.

Acts lessen the habits.

Quest.

Ans.

How sin in a godly man is weakened by his will.

difference by this, a godly man, when he falls into sinne, and is defiled with it, hee washeth himselfe from day to day; you shall find alwaies this, that he gets ground of the sin, of the lust which manifests it selfe in any actuall transgression, still it loseth by it, it gathers not strength, but loseth strength: in a carnall man it is quite contrary, his sinne still increaseth, and intends the habit, and the lust growes stronger and stronger, it gets ground of him, and those good things that hee hath, they are more and more worne out, and so they grow worse and worse from day to day: and that is the property of an evill man, of unregeneracy wheresoever, it is apt to grow worse and worse, and the more falls they have, the more sinne gets ground, and the more they lose; but it is not so with an holy man, the more he falls, the more strength he gathers, he is the more holy by it, the more wary, and watchfull over his wayes, hee is the more emptied of himselfe, and drawes neerer to the LORD, and is the more inflamed with love of him, yea he is strengthened in faith, and repentance, and in every grace; so that here the rule now holds not true, that *Acts increase habits*; but the contrary, *Acts lessen the habits*, which is a paradox in Philosophy, but here it is so.

If you aske how this can be?

I answer, in its owne nature every act intends the habit, as well in a godly man, as another man, but it comes to passe *by accident*, as wee say, because the grace in him is stirred up, by those

those foiles, and slips, those fals and infirmities, to which he is subject; I say, grace is stirred up in him more and more, and he receives more vigour and strength thereby. As we say of true valour, it is increased more by opposition; so it comes to passe, that the more the childe of *God* falls into sinne, the more grace is intended, Satan gets lesse ground; as *Hezekiah*, when he fell into pride, the pride of his heart was lessened more by it after the act, than it was at that time when he shewed his treasure to the Ambassador of the King of *Babel*, he knew not before the pride of his heart; that sinne, that fall, did manifest his corruption, which he did not see before: for when the heart is sincere, when it is pure, when there is a right principle within, grace is set more on worke to resist sinne. So *David*, when hee had numbred the people, that made him more humble, and therefore the *Lord* shewed him more mercy afterwards, than ever he did before, hee shewed him where the Temple should be built, and used him in that worke, whereas hee never shewed him such mercy, and kindnesse before: (I cannot stand to expresse particulars) so it is with all *Gods* children; their hearts are never better, nor in a more holy temper, in a more gracious dispositiō feareful to offend, than after their fals. And therefore consider this, that thou be not deceived; but maist distinguish between this falling into sinne, and washing your selves, and that relapse to which evill men are subject; keep that for a rule, that wheresoever there is true

Valour increased by opposition.



The heart of the Godly best after.

*Note.**Simile.*Vertue gets
strength by
wounds.*Simile.*

grace, still it stirres it selfe more and more, as it findes more resistance, even as the wind and the water, and the fire doth; you know, the water when it findes a stop, it growes more violent, and so also the winde; of the same nature is grace, where it findes a stop, or resistance, it growes more strong, and intent. The heathen had a little glimpse of this truth, when they said of vertue, that it growes more fresh and vigorous by being wounded; it is true of grace and holinesse, the truest vertue, the more it is opposed, the more it growes: even as you see in opposition in the disputes of Scholars, and all kind of contentions in law, or any thing else, the stronger the objection is, where there is ability in the party, it produceth new motions, and new answers, and puts them more to it; so these assaults and temptations, when there is truth of heart within, it drawes out more holinesse to God, and more strength, it multiplies the grace of God within: so that the graces receive increase, and the more they are exercised, and intended, sinnefull lusts decrease, the minde is more emptied forth, the chaffe that is in us, and the drosse is more winnowed out, & the heart is more clenfed from it. So much shall serve for this, that whosoever will come to the Lord in prayer, must sanctifie him in his heart, that is, he must come with a holy and with a pure heart. Where with all we have shewed what this holinesse and purenesse is, wherein it consists, and likewise how the objection is answered, that might deceive us.

, I must adde another, you shall find in *Phil. 4.*
 6. whensoever you come to make your requests
 to the Lord, this is another condition that he re-
 quires, to bee *thankfull* for the mercies you have
 received already: *In all things*, saith hee, *let your*
requests bee made knowne to the Lord, with thank-
giving: as if hee should say, Take heed of this,
 that whensoever you come to put up any petiti-
 on to the Lord, you forget not the duty of thank-
 fulnesse but still when you come to aske any
 thing that you want, remember that you give
 thanks for that you have. Beloved, this condi-
 tion must not be omitted; you see the Lord him-
 selfe puts it in very carefully. *Let your requests bee*
made knowne with Prayer, and supplication, and with
thanksgiving. There is much reason why our pe-
 titions and requests should bee accompanied
 with thanksgiving to the Lord: for is it not rea-
 son when you come to aske somewhat for your
 selves, that you should doe that also that is ae-
 ceptable to God? will a man serve himselfe alto-
 gether to come meerely to aske the thing hee
 wants? This a man may doe out of love to him-
 selfe, out of respect to himselfe, but you must re-
 member to doe something that is pleasing and
 acceptable to the Lord. And therefore you shall
 finde in the old Law, whensoever they had any
 speciall request to the Lord, they were comman-
 ded still to come with *peace Offerings*, *thanks*, *Of-*
ferings, wherein they expressed thankfulness, you
 shal find this custome set down in *Levit.* & other
 places, that such a man as came to request any
 thing,

6. Condition
 required in
 prayer, is
 Thankfulness.
Phil. 4. 6.

Note.

All mercies
reduced to
peace.

If wee looke
onely on our
wants, we can
not be thank-
full.

thing at the *Lords* hands, might not come empty-handed: and what should he bring with him? a peace offering: what was that? thankfulness for that peace he had enjoyed, that was a peace offering. For *peace* is a generall word, comprehending all kinde of mercies, for what is our health, but the peace of our humours within? what is our cheerefulness and joy, but the peace of conscience within? all the comfort wee have in our name and state, it is peace in the particular, &c. So I say, whensoever thou comest with a petition, forget not to come with a peace offering, that is, forget not to come with thanksgiving to the *Lord*, for that which thou hast received; doe somewhat that is acceptable to him as well as seeke for that which is usefull for thy selfe. Beloved, there is much reason for it; because, if a man be poring on his wants still, if it be in his mind when he comes to call upon *God*, it will indispose him for spirituall performance, it will beget murmuring, and sowrenesse, & discontent, it wil imbitter his spirit; but when as a man remembers many mercies that he hath received, when he makes a catalogue of them, and enumerates them, it sweetens his spirit, it makes him more gracious, it acts those graces that are in him, it drawes him neerer to the *Lord*, it quickens him, it makes him more contented with his condition: ~~where~~ ^{here} he is in: whereas, on the other side, forgetfulness of mercies, when a man is onely intent upon his petition to have the thing done, hee breakes many times into that fullnesse of dispo-

disposition, that we find in children; that when they cannot have all that they would, they throw away that which they have; in like manner it is our fault many times, when we come and seek to the Lord for any thing that we have need, we are so intent upon it, that we forget all the mercies we have received, as if they were nothing: the Lord would not have it so, but will have us remember what wee receive, that wee may bee content to want, that our hearts may bee brought to patience and contentment, under the crosse, and to want what it shall please him for a time to deny us: as *Iob* reasoneth, saith he, *I have received good from the Lords hands* (it is his answer to his wife) *and shall I not receive ill?* So, if a good man bee thankfull for mercies, it will make him ready to doe so, it will make him content with that present want: for hee lookes to that which he hath had in hand. When a man saith thus with himselfe, thus, and thus much good I have received at the Lords hands; what though I want such a thing? what though I be prest with such an affliction, and calamity? I will be content to beare it: I say, the Lord lookes for this; expostulating with him and murmuring against him, is not acceptable to him, but a meeke manner of asking things at his hands, when a man so askes, that withall he is content to bee denied, if his good pleasure be so, this he accepts. Now, thankfulness for mercy, makes us ready to be so affected, to be willing to be denied, to be content to resigne our selves to the Lord, and therefore hee will have
 thanke-

Simile.

The sight of
 some good re-
 ceived will
 make us con-
 tent to want.

thankfulnesse to goe with it, whensoever wee come to aske any thing at his hands. Looke to it then, that whensoever you come to seeke the *Lord*, you be thankfull for the mercies you have had, remember them, for it is a great meanes to prevaile in our requests. Thankfulnesse is (as it were) the incense that perfumes your petitions, that makes them acceptable, and prevalent with the *Lord*, so much the sooner: Prayer goes up without incense, when we offer up our petitions without thankfulnesse, because that is a sacrifice, as you know it is called the *calves of our lips*, and ever when you joine thankfulnesse with your petitions, it is like a sacrifice mingled with it, that helpes to prevaile with you.

7. Condition
required in
prayer, is to
come in the
name of the
Lord Iesus
Christ.

James 4.

The next condition is, and it must not be forgotten of all the rest, that wee come to the *Lord*, in the Name of Iesus Christ. This is a thing commonly knowne, you will say, who knowes not that except wee come in the name of *Christ*, no petition can bee acceptable? Beloved, I say to you in that case, as the Apostle *James* speaks, *Iam. 4.* where hee gives this rule, that we should say, *If the Lord will, wee will doe such and such a thing to morrow, &c.* And when the answer would bee ready, Who knowes not this, saith hee, *if you know the will of the LORD, and doe it not, your judgement shall bee greater;* so I say, if any doe not practice this (and it is a thing we are exceeding ready to forget, or wee are ready to doe it in a formall, and in a customary manner, but to doe it in good earnest, as wee ought to doe it, therein

therein commonly wee come short) you know how great a sinne it was, in the old law, to offer without a Priest; in the 17. of *Leviticus* it is said, if any man brought his Sacrifice, though it were the best Sacrifice and the choicest, yet, saith the Text, *If hee did not bring it to the Priest, and to the Altar, but slay his sacrifice else-where, without a Priest, such a man was guilty of blood, and was to bee cut off from his people*: that is, hee was to bee cut off by the Priest, by excommunication, and after by the civill Magistrate. You know, it was *Vzziahs* fault to offer incense, when it was proper to the Priest onely to doe it. The same sinne wee commit when wee come to the Lord, and thinke, because wee have repented, and prayed fervently a little while, and our hearts and spirits are in a good disposition, and because wee know no sinne of which wee are conscious, therefore wee conclude that wee shall be heard. It is true, the Lord requires these qualifications in the party, when hee prayes; but take heed of thinking to bee heard for this, this is to offer without a Priest. You must come thus to the LORD, and say thus unto him, LORD, I confesse (notwithstanding all this) I am unworthy, I have nothing in mee, why thou shouldest regard mee, it cannot bee, that either I, or my prayer should be acceptable, but I beseech thee, take them at the hands of CHRIST our High Priest, hee that is entred into the vaile he that takes the Prayers of the Saints, and mingles them with sweet odours; when a man can really doe

Levit. 17.

How we ought
to come to
God.

Levit. 5. 11.

Our prayers
are not heard
for any excel-
lency in them,
but for Christ.

doe this, with dependance upon Christ, and come boldly in his name, that is to offer a sacrifice to him. This wee must carefully remember, and therefore wee see an excellent expression of it in *Levit. 5.* where this is made cleere to you, that it is not any excellency in the person, nor any fervency in the prayer, nor any purenesse, or holinesse that is found in him, nothing that comes from man, that causeth his prayer to bee acceptable, but it is the Priest: See the place from *vers. 8.* to the *11.* You shall finde there the law was, that he that came to sacrifice, *must bring a sheepe, or a shee Goat*; but if he were not so rich as to doe so, he was able enough to bring *two turtle Doves*, yet if he were not able to doe that, then saith the Text, *He shall bring the tenth part of an Epha of fine floure* (a very small thing) and then it is said, *let him give it to the Priest, and hee shall make an atonement for him, and his sinne shall be forgiven.* Whence I observe this, that it is not the goodnesse of the sacrifice, the price, nor the choinesse nor the excellency of that, though it were a thousand Rammes, and so many Sheepe, and Bullocks (as you reade of many great sacrifices that were offered by the Kings) yet the tenth part of an Epha of fine Floure, which was exceeding little, this prevailed full as much: whence it is evident, that it is not in the excellency of the sacrifice, but the poorest, and the smallest, and the meanest sacrifice will prevaile with God, as well as the richest, and the greatest. What is the reason? The text saith, *It is the Priest that must offer it,*

it, he makes it acceptable. So in this case, let the sacrifice be never so meane, yet if it bee Christ; that offers the sacrifice, if it be comended to the Priest, and hee offers it, the Lord will accept it. You shal find that rule, *Levit. 5. 11. He that brings a sacrifice* (this caution was given) *hee must put no incense to it, neither oyle.* But should the sacrifice be offered without incense? No, you shall find in *Levit. 16.* that alwayes, the Priest when he entred into the *Holy of Holiest*, hee burnt incense that the cloud of that incense might cover the Mercy-seate: the meaning is this, that when any man comesto offer a prayer to the Lord, he can put no incense to it, the Priest onely he must put in incense, that is *IESVS CHRIST* onely must offer the sacrifice, wherein the Lord smells a savour of rest: for the Lord expresseth himselfe in this manner, as if he were disquietted for sin, and can take no rest; now, when *Iesus Christ* offers a sacrifice, he smells a savour of rest; because it comes from him, in whom hee is well pleased: so I say, wee must be carefull, that we remember we come in the name of Christ.

But, you will say, every man doth so, and how shall we know it?

You shall know it by this, if you have boldnesse and confidence, that is an argument that you looke not upon your selves, but upon Christ. When a man is so exceeding timorous, and doubting, and fearefull, that he dares not come to the Throne of grace, or, if hee doe, yet hee makes a great question, whether he shalbe heard

Levit. 5. 11.

Levit. 16. 11.
Christ must
put incense to
our prayers.

Object.

Ans.
How to know
when we come
in our owne
names in
prayer.

or

What required in the heart that comes to God in Christs Name.

Heb. 9.

Object.

Ans.
Two things
required in
our sacrifice.

or no, this is too much looking to himselfe, here, the High Priest is forgotten. If thou come in his name, there is enough to carry thee out, it will breed boldnesse in thee, it will breed confidence: if thou come in the name of Christ, and offer up thy prayers through him, it will cause thee, in every petition thou puttest up, to thinke thy selfe so much beholding to Christ, that thou wilt be ready to say in thy heart, whensoever any petition is granted thee, I may thanke Iesus Christ for this. When a man, I say, shall be so much put upon his score, it will make him so much indebted to the Lord Iesus for his sin that is remitted, and his petition that he hath granted, as that his heart shall bee more enlarged to thankfulnessse, when hee is able to consider the benefit of redemption, and is ready to say with himselfe, If Iesus Christ had not dyed, if I had not had such an high Priest, that hath entred into the very heavens, as the Apostle saith, *Heb. 9. To make intercession for mee*, I had lost this benefit, I had never come to have put up a prayer to the Lord, or if I had, it should not have beene heard.

But you will say to mee, if wee bee heard for Christ; then though a man be sinfull, and though he have none of the precedent conditions, though he have not that holinesse that is required, if the Priest make him acceptable, why may hee not hope as well as the most holy man?

I answer, briefly, though the Priest give all acceptance to the sacrifice, and our prayers are accepted through him, yet that is not all, there

are

are two things besides required, 1. That the person that brings the sacrifice, be cleane; no impure person was to bring a sacrifice; 2. That the sacrifice be without blemish; he that hath a male, and brings a female, is cursed: so then this is required, that the person be righteous, and that the prayer be fervent; such as is indired by the helpe of Gods Spirit, that it may be a sacrifice fit for the Lord. But now, what we have from CHRIST is this; that though the person, and the prayer be thus qualified, and have those forenoted conditions in it, yet it is not acceptable without the Priest. And therefore this should encourage you, when you consider the glorious GOD, his holynesse, that great distance between him and you; and your selves, on the other side, how vile and sinfull you are, and unfit to come & put up your requests to him, now, when you thinke of a Mediator, of an high Priest, who is entred into heaven, who is gone thither, and sits at the right hand of Majesty, making intercession for you, when you consider there is one high Priest, who is able to prevaile, not like the Priests in the Law, but one that is over the house of God, one that is his very Son, who is not entred in through the blood of Bulls and Goates, but with his owne blood; when out of this you shal receive confidence, and come neere him with boldnesse, this is to make use of *Christ*, and to offer sacrifice in him. There is no more remaining now, but that when you have considered all the conditions mentioned, & fitted your prayers according to them, that you

L

The person
must be holy,
and the pray-
er fervent.

How to make
use of Christ
as our Priest.

be

Waiting in
prayer requi-
red.

Simile.

Instances of
being over-
hasty after
prayer.

be confident, and expect much; that when you have prayed, you may say thus; *Lord, I expect now the granting of them, thou canst not now deny them, Lord, I will wait now.* And this is our fault, when we have prayed, and the thing comes not presently, we are ready to give over, we are not willing to waite. Beloved, that is one thing specially to bee remembred; wee must so farre magnifie our prayers, wee must set a price upon them so farre, and so esteeme them, and thinke them of that worth, that they wil bring the thing to passe. If a man take a drugge, or a medicine, or an herbe, and use it to a wound, or a disease, once or twice, or thrice, and if hee see it doth no good, he will lay it aside, and take another medicine: for, saith he, I have tryed it, and it will doe me no good; so a man doth with his prayers, he saith, I have sought to the *L o r d*, I have prayed for this thing twice, or thrice, and it is not granted me; and therefore he is ready to lay it aside, as if it were not effectuell, and to take another meanes: this neglect of prayer is, not to know the force of the medicine. You must know therefore of what efficacy prayer is, and trust it, and not give over (for it is effectuell to bring the thing to passe) and make not haste, but stay, and wait. It was *Sarahs* fault, when *Abraham* and she sought to the *Lord* for a sonne, she made too much haste to give *Hagar* to *Abraham*, when as they should have stayed till the *L o r d* had done it his owne way. So *Rebekkah*, there was a promise, and no doubt *Jacob* and she prayed for the fulfilling of that

that promise; but she made too much haste, she tooke a wrong way to get the blessing by lying; this was not waiting, but a stepping out to another meanes; because they thought prayer and dependance upon God would not doe it. So Saul would not wait upon God, but he would offer sacrifice, this was to make haste. And so it is, when a man is discouraged; David, when the thing was not presently granted, he was ready to give over, and falls to a desperate complaint, saying, *One day I shall fall by the hands of Saul.* Take heed of this, and when wee offer up our prayers thus, learne to know what they are, learne to trust them, and to depend, and wait upon God; say, certainly I shall not be denied, the thing shall surely be granted.

(*)

1 Sam. 27. 1.

FINIS.

A.		
Acceptable	Fol.	
N O naturall man can make a prayer acceptable to God.	9	Blessings bestowed from love and providence different; <i>ibid.</i>
Acquaintance.		Blessings, God defers to heare us, to teach us to use them. 65
Acquaintance how it is gotten and lost.	14	Businesse.
Amisse.		Businesse, overmuch hinders time from prayer. 91
We pray amisse in three respects.	50.	Businesse, wee must not be too intent upon it. <i>ibid.</i>
Angels.		C.
Angels, how they speake to God, and one another.	36	Care.
Arguments.		Worldly care hinders from prayer. 38
Arguments in prayer of what use.	45	Care required in prayer. 54
Arguments in prayer strengthen our faith.	112	Carnall.
Arguments used by the Saints of old	121	A holy man may make a carnall prayer. 9
Armour.		Our hearts being carnall are loth to come to God in prayer. 37
Prayer teacheth to use the rest of our spiritall armour.	23	Cate.
Attributes.		Nine cases of Conscience touching prayer. 71
Attributes of God acknowledged in prayer.	108	Change.
Attributes of two sorts.	<i>ibid.</i>	Prayer changeth not God but us. 44
B.		
Benefit.		Christ.
Prayer, the benefit of it.	21	A man must have Christ before God give him any thing else. 103
Blessings.		Our prayers must be offered through Christ. 140
Blessings bestowed upon condition we pray.	42	Our prayers granted for Christ. 143
Blessings enjoyed without prayer uncertaine.	47	What required of us to come to God in Christ. 144
		M Church

THE TABLE.

Church.		God defers to answer us for foure reasons.	64
God bestowes things on wicked men for the good of the Church.	48	Delay.	
Cleanse.		Delays must not be taken for denials from God.	60
Means to cleanse a mans selfe.	130	Desire.	
Command.		Desires, when they be good.	4
It is Gods command we should pray.	19, 77	Desires must bee offered to God.	6
Communion.		Desires good, whence they must rise.	ibid.
Communion with God maintained by prayer.	13	Desires not good, without the use of means.	92
Conscience.		See outward, see Naturall.	
Conscience, the breaches of it made up by prayer.	78	Dyed.	
Conscience of sin hinders prayer.	130	The end why Christ dyed.	19
Condition.		Disadvantage.	
Conditions or qualifications of prayer.	102	Disadvantage that comes by omission of prayer.	27
Continuance, Continuall.		Dulness.	
Continuall to pray, what.	15	Dulnesse to prayer two causes of it.	57
Continuall praying, the benefite of it.	71		
Continuance in prayer required.	113	E	
Continuall praying, a note of ser- uency.	118	Equity.	
Costly.		Equity in performing the duty of prayer.	20
We should make our seruices to God costly.	33	Exalt.	
Covenant.		Who they be that God exalts.	22
Covenant generall before the parti- cular.	102	Example.	
D		Example of the Saints a motive to prayer.	20
Danger.		Excellency.	
Dangers in omitting prayer.	70	Excellency of man what.	33
Deferre.		F	
God defers to answer us many times.	60	Faith.	
		Faith in Gods power and providence, the want of it hinders prayer.	38
		Faith.	

THE TABLE.

Faith tryed by Gods deferring to grant out prayers. 64	for five reasons. 83
Of praying in faith, when we want a particular promise. 98	Friends. 85
Faith required in prayer what. 99	How to know that God and we are friends. 25
105	G
Faith required in prayer, why. 106	Gesture. 85
Faith twofold. ibid.	Gifts. 13
How to know we pray in faith. 113	Prayer acknowledgeth Gods gifts. 13
Faith, fervency a fruit of it. 119	God.
Faithfulness.	God, what moves him to do us good and evil. 54
Faithfulness of God strengthens faith in prayer. 118	Glory.
Fall.	Glory, what. 12
Men of great grace may fall. 67	Glory of God strengthens faith in prayer. 109
Falls of the godly and others differ. 134	Grace.
Falls of the godly weaken sinne. ibid.	Grace may be prayed for in a carnall man. 5
The hearts of Saints best after falls. 135	Grace increased and exercised by prayer. 13
Fervency.	Grace grows by exercise. 35
Fervency required in prayer. 115	Grace, why men decline in it. 70
Fervency why requisite. 116	Grace given to the humble. 123
When a man is said to be fervent. 117	Who receive all of free grace. 125
Cautions about fervency. 118	See Fall.
Fervency whence it springs. 119	Greater.
Fix.	Prayer a greater matter than worldly businesse. 32, 89
The best way to fit us to prayer. 34	H
Staying for fitness after sinne committed, we are more unfit. 79	Heard.
Forme.	How to know when our prayers are heard. 100
Concerning praying after a set form. 80	Heart.
Objectors against a set forme, doe the same thing. 81	Heart is not bettered by customary prayer. 30
A set forme of prayer, though it may be used, yet it is not sufficient	Heart enlarged. 101
	Heart
	M 3

THE TABLE.

Heart must be cleansed when we pray. 105	Inward. 105
Heart must be holy in prayer. 107	Inward man disadvantaged by neglecting prayer. 108
Heart pure what? 131	Inward distemper, whence it is. 19
Hypocrisie. 31	Joy. 22
Hinderance. 31	Joy comes by prayer. 22
Time spent in prayer is no hinderance. 33	Justice. 109
Holiness. 33	Justice of God strengthens faith in prayer. 109
Holiness required in prayer. 126	Key. 111
Holiness what? 127	Prayer the key that unlocks Gods treasures. 111
Honour. 127	Little. 111
Honour that God bath by prayer. 127	A little measure may serve as well as greater. 111
Humble, Humiliation. 127	Little measure may serve as well as greater. 111
God deserves to grant our requests to humble us. 127	Love. 111
The Saints begin their prayers with humiliation, why? 104	Love of Christ will make us pray to him. 111
Humility requisite in prayer. 127	Lusts. 111
I. 127	Lusts, when we pray to satisfy them. 111
Idleness. 127	When the naturall affection becomes a lust. 111
Idleness what? 127	How to know we pray for our lusts. 111
Image. 127	Luther. 111
Image of God increased by prayer. 33	Manner. 111
Impediments. 127	Manner of desiring things. 111
Impediments to prayer. 7. 36	God grants our prayers in our manner. 111
Remedy against impediments. 39	Manner of coming to God. 111
Incense. 127	Means. 111
Christ puts incense to our prayers. 143	God effects not things by our means. 111
Indisposition. 127	Means. 111
Indisposition to prayer. 40. 74	
Indisposition a motive to prayer. 75	
Indisposition what it hinders not. 76	
Infirmities. 127	
Infirmities how the spirit helps them. 101	

THE TABLE

Meanes, wee give too much to them. 58

Meanes, the use of them. 58

Meanes must be used for foure reasons. 93

Wee pray to have things in use of them. 94

Prayer not the onely meane. 94

Meanes, three Cautions in using them. 95

When wee pray in faith, wee are diligent in the use of the meanes. 134

Measure in granting our prayers. 67

A lesse measure of grace may serve as well as greater. 65

Mercy. 62

Mercy of God strengtheth faith in prayer. 109

Misery. 102

The misery of wicked men. 18

Mistake. 102

If our prayers be not granted, wee mistake in them. 102

Name. 102

Prayer must be offered in Christs name, and why. 101

How to pray in his name. 101

Natural. 102

Naturall desires not excluded in prayer. 102

Neglect. 102

Neglect the cause of our wandering thoughts. 73

Prayer must not be neglected after great sinne. 77

Objections.

Objections, the removing of them helps to prayer. 40

Objections against prayer. 40

Occasions. 40

Occasions, the variety of them hinder from prayer. 37

Outward. 40

Outward things, when the desire of them is good. 40

Outward men disadvantaged by neglect of prayer. 28

Outward things, when the desire of them is bad. 47

Particular. 40

How farre we must believe the granting particular requests. 99

Particular sinnes must be removed when we pray. 104

Power. 104

Power, how men may use it. 104

Power, how men may use it. 104

Power, how men may use it. 104

Power, how men may use it. 104

Power, how men may use it. 104

Power, how men may use it. 104

Power, how men may use it. 104

Power, how men may use it. 104

Power, how men may use it. 104

Power, how men may use it. 104

THE TABLE.

Prayer.	Purity.
Prayer what. 2	Purity what. 132
Prayer of two sorts. 3	See Heart.
Prayer of wicked men howlings. <i>ibid.</i>	
Prayer, how expressed in Scripture. 6	
Prayer right what. 9	Q.
Prayer, & motives to it. 19	Quiet.
Prayer prevalent. 22	When we pray in faith the mind is quiet. 113
Prayer formall as good as none. 29	R.
Prayer, when it is rightly performed. 30	Regenerate.
Prayer, what we must do in it. 31	Two things in a regenerate man. 9
Prayer, what makes men slight it. 36	Regenerate part as to prayer. <i>ibid.</i>
Prayers which are best. 45	Repentance.
Prayers faithfull not lost. 71	Repentance of particular sinnes when we pray. 128
Prayer why used. 84	S.
Prayer when granted, and when not. 101	Sacrifice.
Priest.	Humility an acceptable Sacrifice. 134
How to make use of Christ as a Priest. 145	Sacrifice, what required in it. 144
Presence.	Safety.
We are loth to come into Gods presence, and why. 37	Safety, wherein it consists. 23
Pride.	Satan.
The heart must be purged from pride in our prayers. 105	Satan hinders prayer. 39
Promises.	Shutt.
Faith in Gods promises required in prayer. 107	5. Cautions about shortnesse of prayer. 90
Providence.	Sinne.
Want of faith in Gods providence hindreth prayer. 38	Sinnes committed hinder from prayer. 39
Providence of God may be crossed by our prayers. 68	Sinnes committed must not make us neglect prayer, and why. 76, 77
Faith in Gods providence requisite in prayer. 107	Sinnes increase if we recover not. 78
	Sinne, how we must be disposed to it. 80
	Sinnes cry louder than our prayers, till our persons be right. 103
	Sinnes

THE TABLE

Sinnes particular must bee removed when we pray. 104	Objection touching time spent in prayer. 104
Sinne, the conscience of it hinders prayer. 105	God grants not prayers in our time. 59
Sincerity. 110	Of straitning in time of prayer. 88
Sincerity in prayer. 110	Time should bee allowed for prayer. 89
Spirits his case. 116	Time busshanded: seek for prayer. 90
Spirit. 116	Trust. 93
To serve God in Spirit, what. 7	Wee trust not God, if wee use not means. 93
Spirit not straitned in a set forme of prayer. 82	Wee are readier to trust men than God. 98
See Infinity. 116	
Strength. 116	
We cannot fit our selves to prayer by our owne strength. 36	
T	
Temptation. 73	V.
Temptation, a cause of wandring thoughts. 73	Valour.
Thankfulness. 14	True valour, how increased. 135
God requires prayer, that wee might be thankfull. 14	Vnchangeable.
Thankfulness requisite in prayer. 137	Vnchangeableness of GOD streng- theneth faith in prayer. 110
What hinders thankfulness. 138	Vnfitnesse.
Thoughts. 138	Objections against prayer, in regard of unfitness. 34
Case of Conscience about wandring thoughts. 72	Vnholy. 127
Thoughts wandring in prayer, foure causes of them. ibid.	Vnholy man who. 127
Vaine thoughts admitted, cause wan- dring in prayer. 73	Vnregenerate.
Thoughts wandring, how to prevent them. 74	Vnregenerate men may frame pray- ers as well as others. 103
Time. 74	Vnthankfulness.
Times of prayer, twice a day at the least. 16	Vnthankfulness, the heart must bee purged from. 105
	Voice. 84
	Voice used in prayer. 86
	Voice, why used in prayer. 86
	W.

THE TABLE.

W.	how.	134
Wandering, see thoughts.	Will, Willing.	
Wants.	Will accepted for the dead when.	34
We must pray, though God know our wants, and why.	We doubt more whether God be willing, than able.	108
We must not alwaye look on our wants.	Worship.	
How to be content to want.	Prayer required that we may worship God.	41
Waiting.	To worship God what.	ibid.
Waiting required in prayer.	Wound.	
Weaknesse.	Vertue gets strength by wounds.	136
Weaknesse cause of wandering in prayer.	Wrath.	
Some weakned in a godly man, and	The heart must be cleansed from wrath in prayer.	105

FINIS.

